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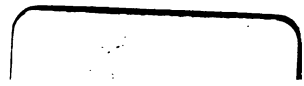

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THE MARKED MAN.

CHAPTER I.

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"Impossible, Sir Alfred; you'll catch your death of cold."

Sir Alfred paused for a minute, and then said—

"I'm anxious to know who my anonymous correspondent is, and what she wants with me;" and then, looking at his watch, he added, "Have a hackney coach ready at the private entrance as speedily as possible."

"Very well, Sir Alfred," and Booth left the room.

"And now, let me cast my eye over this abominable scrawl again," muttered Sir Alfred, pulling out a dirty looking letter. He read as follows:—

"SIR ALFRED,

"I can't come to you—so you must come to me. I must see you. Come to me at twelve o'clock this night. I shall be on Tower Hill, near the entrance gate to the Tower.

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"P.S.—Don't fail as you value your future well being. No harm is intended you. Be sure you bring this letter with you."

"No harm intended me!" repeated Sir Alfred, putting up the letter. "Perhaps not. It is better however to be on the safe side, and be prepared for whatever may happen," and taking a pistol from a drawer he placed it in his breast pocket.

Booth announced that the coach was ready.

"Shall you be away long, Sir Alfred?" enquired the valet as he assisted his master to put on his rough coat.

"I can't tell," replied the baronet, tying a

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Sir Alfred shivered as he buttoned up his coat. The coach proceeded from street to street through the pelting rain, till it arrived at Tower Hill. At this moment only a few yards separated the brothers. In the light that gleamed from the window above sat Major Fitzgerald keeping an anxious, weary vigil by the bed-side of his suffering friend. Little did either dream what a powerful influence the events of that night was to exercise on their separate destinies.

The coach stopped, and the driver called out in a husky voice—

"Please, sir, this is the third lamp."

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out," and dropping half-a-guinea into the man's hand, he sprang from the coach and hastened under an archway.

"A riglar trump that," cried the coachman, satisfied, almost, for the first time in his life, with the fare. "'Spose I ain't to wait?"

Scarcely had the man driven off when a female voice whispered into Fitzgerald's ear, "you are punctual, Sir Alfred—this way—it's dark—give me your hand."

Fitzgerald put his hand on his pistol, demanding where he was being led.

"To my lodgings, Sir Alfred, where we shall have no listeners."

"Where are your lodgings?"

"Close by; no harm is intended you?"

"How am I to know that? Who are you?"

"Hush! Singleton that was."

"Go on! I fancied I recollected your voice."

They walked on through a labyrinth of dark alleys, till they arrived at a large, open space, imperfectly lighted; in which, wet as it was, a squalid, drunken, disorderly set of wretches

dirty and dilapidated. Stopping at one the woman took from her pocket a latch key and opened the door.

"Wait a minute," she whispered. "I'll bring a light." She speedily returned, and ushered him into a room almost bare of furniture, but quite clean.

"Not a very elegant room to receive Sir Alfred Fitzgerald in," said Dobree, with a bitter smile, "but such as it is, you are welcome. Be seated, Sir Alfred."

The baronet made no reply, but took off his comforter and rough coat.

"What an infernal smell," said he, almost gasping for breath.

"True, Sir Alfred, it's the smell of poverty!" replied Dobree.

A tap was made on the door, and before the woman could prevent it, a man entered.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Dobree, I didn't know you had company. I came down for the posset you were so good as to make for Bess."

"Here it is," and she took a saucepan from the fire, gave it to the man, who immediately left the room, and she locked the door.

"That's what you ought to have done at first," said the baronet. "The fellow stared at me as if I had been a ghost."

"Gentlemen are as rare here as ghosts. But John is very honest; he's my sister's husband. You've nothing to fear from John."

"I fear no man, nor woman either," rejoined Sir Alfred, haughtily.

"Perhaps not. John is generally in bed by ten, and that's why I appointed a late meeting, so that we might not be interrupted."

"Why did you not appoint a nearer place?" asked the baronet, pettishly, "and not bring me such a distance on such an infernally wet night."

"Let me be sure it's yourself before I speak. Did you bring my letter with you?"

"Yes; here it is."

"Good! Now I can proceed without making more mistakes."

"More! Have you made any?"

"Yes. I was near making a serious one."

"How was that?" inquired her companion, carelessly.

"Why, I mistook your brother for you, and was very nearly saying more than I ought to have said, before I found out I had made a blunder. In fact, I was very near letting the cat out of the bag."

"What do you mean?" asked Sir Alfred, evidently very fidgetty.

"Oh! you know very well what I mean,"

replied the woman, looking scrutinisingly at him.

"I have not the most remote idea," replied the baronet, with a carelessness that was evidently assumed. "You give me credit for more penetration than I possess."

"Stuff! That won't do for me; you know perfectly well to what I allude. You can't make me believe that your lady mother went to kingdom come without telling you about the matter. Her conscience wouldn't let her."

The baronet started up.

"Really, Mrs. Dobree," said he "you grow more and more enigmatical, and as I see no probability of finding out what you mean, I shall wish you good-night."

"What!" cried she, detaining him. "Do you persist in saying you don't understand my meaning? Then I'll enlighten you," and whispering in his ear, she added, "There! didn't your mother tell you that?"

"No; she did not."

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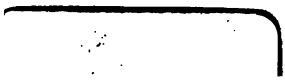

stopped at a dressmaker's, and, after looking at the dresses in the window, went in.

"I've housed her!" thought Fitzgerald; "but I'd better wait, she may not live here."

He was right. In a few minutes she came out again, and proceeded at a quick pace to the Minories, where she suddenly went down a flight of narrow steps, leading to a square-paved court, and Fitzgerald feared he had lost her, when he caught sight of her again at the door of a house at the upper end of this miserable locale. He saw her take from her pocket a latch-key, and let herself in, closing the door after her. Fitzgerald took the number of the house, and made his exit from a place that was not very desirable to be in, even in the daytime.

Fitzgerald lost no time in informing Sugden of the discovery he had so fortunately made.

"Good!" said the lawyer, "I'm engaged till half-past nine. Take your coffee with me, and afterwards we'll beat up the woman's quarters; we shall be more likely to meet with her then than if we went earlier."

It was nearly eleven o'clock when the two friends reached the entrance to the filthy court in which Mrs. Dobree resided. Several ruffianly-looking men and three or four disreputable females were standing at the top of the narrow flight of steps leading down to this Pandemonium, who sullenly made way for our adventurers, whom they eyed with mingled looks of astonishment and ferocity.

"Be on your guard!" whispered Sugden, as they descended the steps, "this is a cut-throat-looking place; and I consider our expedition not altogether free from danger, I promise you."

"Never fear! We are no chickens, and I hardly think these fellows will venture to molest us."

"I should be of your opinion if the place

"Come, I say, this won't do, my flash pinks!" hiccuped the female, folding her huge arms. "You must pay your footing. You must tip handsomely you know."

"Aye, that ye must, by the Hill of Howth!" pursued the Irishman, "or it will be the worse for you."

"Paddy, let 'em alone!" shouted a voice, with a Jewish accent; "you can deal with 'em as they come out."

"That's thrue, my darlint!" vociferated the Hibernian; and seizing the woman by the arm, pushed her on to the pavement.

"Quick!" whispered Fitzgerald, hurrying Sugden down the court, "this is the house. Shall I knock?"

"No! ring," replied Sugden, "the less noise we make, the better."

A man with a pot of porter in his hand came to the house, and, with a latch-key, opened the door. Fitzgerald asked for Mrs. Dobree, and the man told them to enter. Then taking a light which stood in the passage, he ushered them into a back room—the same, indeed, to which Sir Alfred Fitzgerald had been shown.

"It's lucky, your honour, that I saw you," said the man, respectfully. "It's very dangerous for gentlemen like you to come into our court here in the daytime, let alone the night. You should have entered by the Minories, Sir Alfred, as you did the last time you was here."

Fitzgerald was about to answer, when Sugden, pinching his arm, said, adroitly—

"Then you knew this gentleman again, did you?"

"Oh! dear yes, sir," replied the man, "I knew him the moment I saw him, though I was only in the room for a minute t'other night, when he visited my sister-in-law. I

"Went off!" echoed Fitzgerald.

"Yes, she was to have gone, you know," said Sugden, significantly.

"Certainly she was," cried the man eagerly, for he rejoiced in this opportunity of talking with a baronet, "and for a wonder the Captain was to his time. I went on board with my sister-in-law to see that she would be made comfortable, and I saw everything snug, thanks to your bounty, Sir Alfred," bowing low to Fitzgerald. "I was with her till the ship left the Docks."

"Let me see, the name of the vessel was—" said Sugden, pausing.

"'The Dido,' sir, quite right. The werry vessel you know, Sir Alfred, as you wished her to go in, because you knowed the Captain, who told me, his own self, as how he'd be sure to deliver her safe to Blozer and Potts,

the werry moment they got to New York, for them to see about the 'nuity you so generously settled on sister."

"I believe we may go now?" said Sugden.

"Yes," replied Fitzgerald, putting some silver into the man's hand.

"Thank you, Sir Alfred, you're werry kind," said the latter, with a low bow. "But you mustn't think of going up them steps again, gentlemen, they'll garrotte you if you do. I will show you the way through the alleys to the Minories. Please wait here a minute until I see if the court is clear."

So saying, he went out, and returning, beckoned them to follow him.

"Now keep close," he whispered, when they got out, "neither meddle nor make."

Few persons were in the court, and these merely gave them a gruff "Good-night" as they passed. Presently the man turned into a narrow winding alley, in which they could scarcely see their hands before them. On a sudden, a low whistle was heard.

making their escape. Fitzgerald, less fortunate, stumbled over a huge stone, and fell; and, before he could rise, two ruffians threw themselves upon him. A furious struggle ensued. Fitzgerald, however, as he had observed, was no chicken, and succeeded at length in recovering his legs. The strongest of his assailants then attempted to grapple with him; but Fitzgerald, putting out his foot, laid him sprawling on his back, and before the other scoundrel could attack him, darted down another alley on his left, which brought him into a small paved court, where he paused to take breath, and consider what should be his next step. The sound of approaching footsteps, however, allowed no time for deliberation, and he was groping about in the dark to find an outlet, when his hand was suddenly seized by some one, who pulled him

through a door in the wall, just as his pursuers were on him.

"What made you so late?" whispered a female voice. "I've been on the watch for you the last half-hour. But, hush! Don't speak, or missus will hear you; she's such a one for hearing anybody!"

Before Fitzgerald could explain or remonstrate, she hurried him down a long narrow passage, into what appeared to be, as well as the darkness permitted, a sort of scullery.

"Betty!" cried a shrill voice, "why don't you answer when I call you?"

"Goodness gracious, here she comes! If she only sets eyes upon you, I don't know what will become of us!"

And without another word she thrust Fitzgerald into a closet and locked the door, just as her mistress entered with a light.

Fitzgerald could not help being amused at this new dilemma.

"Upon my life though, I may be taken for a burglar!" he thought, laughing inwardly.

"There! There goes the basin with the flour for the cake!" exclaimed the enraged mistress. "You've gone and locked the cat up in the closet, you careless hussy!" And opening the door, she called, "Tom! Tom! come out, you tiresome cat!"

"Really! madam," said Fitzgerald, who was covered with flour.

But the woman did not stay to hear any more, for perceiving he was a stranger, both she and the maid ran screaming into the street, "Thieves! thieves! murder!" with all their might; and Fitzgerald, seeing the coast clear, ran off, and in a short time reached Aldgate, where he fell in with Sugden and the guide, who, with a constable, were hurrying to his assistance.

CHAPTER III.

Lady Bendish was too ill, or fancied herself too ill, to travel; so the Countess Trelawney took a ready furnished house in Southampton. In truth, she was not sorry to exchange the monotony of Isleham, which had become insupportable, for the dash and bustle of Southampton, then in the height of the season. The presence of her sister, however, threatened to prove a considerable drawback to her enjoyment. Lady Bendish's peculiarities made her a very disagreeable companion. Her ruling passion was to make herself a sort of martyr, and everybody around her

by consigning her sister entirely to the care of Lady Susan, whose utilitarianism peculiarly qualified her, as Lady Trelawney sneeringly observed, for such a charge. Having thus adroitly got rid of all claim upon her time and attention, her ladyship prepared to play her favourite part of Lady Paramount.

"Here, at least," she thought, "I shall have no rival."

Alas!

Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat.

"Lady Overdone," cried the servant, thowing open the door, and to the Countess's inexpressible mortification, her dreaded rival floated into the room.

"This is an unexpected pleasure," said the Countess, who wished her visitor at Jericho.

"Equally unexpected on my part," cried her visitor, with more sincerity, who had

come for the express purpose of annoying the Countess.

"Where are you?" enquired the latter.

"At Eveden."

"Eveden."

"Yes; it's within a drive. Don't you know it?"

"No; I thought it was in Warwickshire."

"No, in Hampshire. We came down on Tuesday. They told me at 'The Star' you were here, so I made the best of my time to pay my respects to you."

"How's your daughter?"

"Quite well; she'll be here soon. Where is Lady Susan?"

"Upstairs with her aunt; I'll send for her."

"Pray do not; there's no occasion. Hope to see her on the tenth."

The ground being cleared, the combatants prepared for action. Lady Overdone made the first hit, by saying—

tagonist, with a laugh.

"Nor skin them," repeated the Countess, wincing. "When people come to watering places they can't bring their houses on their backs like snails."

"It would be a new sort of *habeas corpus*, if they could. But talking of houses, you must see Eveden. We give our grand archery fête there on the tenth, the dresses Kensal green, you know. You must come; all the world will be there."

"I can't answer for Lady Susan, or her aunt," said the Countess, "but—"

"Well, come as many as you can," pursued Lady Overdone; "that's a *sine qum non*."

"But won't it be awkward dressing in

Kensal Green?" enquired the Countess, maliciously.

"Did I say Kensal Green?" asked Lady Overdone, colouring. "I meant Kendal green, with black plumes and so forth. But you needn't dress so—only the commonpolites."

"Well, I'll come if I can," said the Countess.

"Do," rejoined Lady Overdone; "and I'll show you my *messagerie*, and the cedar planted by the Czar. I've got no lions or tigers yet, but I gave fifty pounds for a lot of monkies yesterday, and a brace of ostriches. Mr. Hook, who is staying with us, has promised to get me a unicorn. What are you smiling at?"

"Nothing," replied the Countess, contemptuously. "Perhaps Mr. Hook could get you a griffin at the same time."

"And if he did, we could pay for them both, I hope," said Lady Overdone, bridling; "aye, and feed 'em too, and not make 'em ill

more in danger of a surfeit."

"Well, if you wish to see Eveden," said Lady Overdone, "you must come on the tenth, as we go to our place in the Highlands directly after. Overdone, who has just been and bought it, was delighted with the Cossacks."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the Countess, "I hope the Russians haven't invaded Scotland!"

"Who said they had?" demanded Lady Overdone, snappishly.

"I understood you that Lord Overdone had seen the Cossacks there," rejoined the Countess.

"Well, what's to hinder him. Do you suppose he put his eyes in his pocket."

The Countess made no answer, but smiled, which so enraged her rival, that it is impossible to say what rejoinder she might have made, if her daughter had not at the instant

entered the room, accompanied by her attendant, Miss Jukes.

This young lady took no notice of the Countess, but going to the glass, said, in a snappish tone—

"Are you ready?"

Lady Overdone, starting up, replied in the affirmative, and asked her daughter if she had selected the prizes, a question the heiress to a million and a half did not condescend to answer.

"She has," whispered Miss Jukes, "but don't speak to her; she's not in the best of tempers."

Lady Overdone bit her lip, saying—

"Did she meet anyone?"

Miss Jukes shook her head.

"Perhaps she expected—"

"Hush! She'll hear us."

"Come!" said the heiress, imperiously, and slightly curtseying to the Countess, she left the room, followed by Miss Jukes and her mother.

"Ah! pride will have a fall," exclaimed the Countess, prophetically.

CHAPTER IV.

Lady Bendish continued too much indisposed to go to Eveden, nor would she part with her niece, so the Countess Trelawney went alone. A refreshing breeze blew from the Solent, while opportune showers laid the dust. Carriage after carriage whirled towards the scene of action, freighted with gay people of both sexes. Nor was the greatest archer of all inactive, but plied his vocation with a skill and industry that many a sensitive heart had cause to rue.

Entering the park through a lofty arch, the Countess soon came in sight of the house, a magnificent stone structure of the Corinthian

order, commanding pleasant sea views, with the Isle of Wight in the distance. The grounds, extensive and varied, descended to the beach by beautiful hanging woods, and had been planned by the most eminent ornamental gardener of the day, who had carried out the suggestion of Nature. There were temples, obelisks, statues, fountains in abundance, but these were so judiciously disposed as to embellish, what, without them, would have appeared incomplete. Heliotropes and other sweet smelling flowers filled the air with their fragrance, and a *menagerie* had been recently added to the establishment.

The Countess at first felt the influence of a scene so lovely. But every paradise has its serpent, and this reptile reminded the Countess that her hated rival reigned here supreme, which insinuation at once jaundiced her eye, and destroyed all enjoyment. Nevertheless she descended all smiles and honey to the elegant little temple where Lord and Lady Overdone received their numerous guests, attired

Robin Hood, was a tall, thin, hard-featured, wiry man, whom you felt at a glance it would be hopeless to *do* in any transaction you might have with him. He was listened to with great attention by the House, on all questions connected with finance and the currency, which, indeed, he understood thoroughly. His lordship was by no means a bad-natured man, and liberally dispensed that wealth he had so successfully amassed. But he hated humbug, and above all things despised a drone.

Leaving her *cara sposo* to receive the Mayor of Southampton, who had just alighted, Lady Overdone led her "dear friend!" through the grounds, with the amiable intention of annoying her, by expatiating on its beauties.

The first object encountered was a small

sickly cedar, enclosed in an iron railing richly gilt.

"There! That's the cedar planted by the Czar," exclaimed Lady Overdone. "I think I named it to you the other day."

"You did," replied the Countess, resolved to praise nothing and find fault with everything. "The railing is well enough, but I see nothing to admire in that sickly looking tree."

"Who said there was?" rejoined Lady Overdone, snappishly; "but it shows in what high estimation Overdone is held by the *autograph*, don't it? He promised Overdone all sorts of things if he'd settle in Russia. Ask Menzicoff else."

"That was going a great length," said the Countess, drily.

"You'll see something to admire and astonish you in this, I hope," continued Lady Overdone, pointing to a splendid copy of Canova's masterpeice. "That's *Cupid and Frisky.*"

"Well, you *are* difficult!" cried Lady Overdone, unable to conceal her chagrin. "Everybody but your ladyship allows Cupid and Frisky to be a masterpiece. But here's my rosery! If you don't like that you'll like nothing, and I'll give you up. That *jeu-d'-esprit* in the centre there, is made of *Ferrara* marble, and came from Rome. See what a height it throws the water. There's not such a rosery in all England as mine!"

"I beg your pardon," said the Countess. "You are wrong there. I saw a rosery exactly like this in some low tea gardens, in which I once took shelter, called Bagnigge Wells!"

Lady Overdone was annoyed almost beyond endurance, but she merely said—

"It's time to go to the archery ground," and led the way.

The place was already crowded. The archers were anxiously preparing their weapons, whilst a splendid brass band played the most enlivening airs. An immense marquee erected near the *menagerie* bore the following facetious inscription: "No admission until feeding time. Theodore Hook, M.C." Refreshments, however, were liberally dispensed in a smaller marquee.

"Oh! here's my *prima donna*," cried Lady Overdone, as Theodore Hook advanced to pay his respects to the Countess Trelawney.

"Your ladyship must excuse me. I must show the prizes to these good folks here," and glad of an excuse to escape from her "dear friend," Lady Overdone joined the archers.

"So you're master of the ceremonies, I see, Mr. Hook," said the Countess, pointing to the inscription on the large marquee.

"Yes; and find it no sinecure, I promise

where, and to do funny into the bargain. Do grin through a horse-collar for me, Lady Trelawney; it would be such a relief."

"I should have a crowded audience at any rate," said the Countess, pleasantly.

"Oh! leaves—leaves, but no fruit," rejoined Hook. "A bushel of chaff with two grains of wheat among it! Your ladyship is one, and—"

"Yourself the other. Eh?"

"On their own merits modest men are dumb," replied Hook. "I've been called a rogue *in grain* before now. But what has your ladyship been saying to the lady of the revels? She looks as gloomy as my tailor, or a brazen Venus in a white frost."

"Why, I criticised her rosery pretty freely, and—"

"Ah! that was an offence of the greatest magnitude," interrupted Hook. "Her rosery and her *messagerie*, as she persists in calling the latter, are her pets. She asked me the other day what I thought she ought to feed her ostriches on."

"And what did you say?"

"I answered 'tenpenny nails.'"

"Ah! that was speaking *iron*ically," said the Countess. "Is there any getting at the heiress?"

"Easier to put an extinguisher on the sun. She's besieged by all the needy men about town—except Brummel and myself."

"And why don't you go in for the prize?"

Hook shrugged his shoulders, saying—

"If I carried it, the gain would be a loss. Poor as I am, a million and a half wouldn't tempt me, with such an incumbrance. Look at her! She appears as if she had lived upon lemons all her life."

"Sour enough," said the Countess, laughing.

How absurd!

"Absurd, indeed."

"How did you allay the storm?"

"Storm! Why, I said I was the worst person in the world to *raise* the *wind.* She despises her mother, and fears her father; but has no love for him."

"Whom does she love?" asked the Countess.

"Certainly not Jukes, whom you see there, watching her like a cat, for she despises her heartily, knowing Jukes is set over her as a spy. The odds are the heiress will prove too sharp for her in the end, for she's cunning as she is self-willed."

"Who do you think will take her at last?" asked the Countess.

"Charley Coventry. He has spent two fortunes already, and is quite willing to try

his hand at getting through a third, even though it should be a million and a half. He was expected here a week since, and I took a lodging for him at Southampton. But, here's the governor. Your ladyship must excuse me. I must set the archers to work, or I shall run a risk that one of the ladies will bowstring me."

When the shooting was over, the company began to collect near the large marquee, as impatient for feeding-time as the ostriches and monkeys in the menagerie adjoining. The Countess was hanging on Lord Overdone's arm, when Miss Jukes, sidling up, whispered—

"He's come!"

"Have your eyes about you then," returned his lordship, quickly; and Jukes vanished.

"It's hard," proceeded his lordship, glancing at his daughter, who was conversing, in high spirits, with Charley Coventry, who had just arrived. "It's hard, Countess, to be obliged to open one's door to a set of idle,

can't shut them out if they are admitted elsewhere."

"Ah! there lies the evil!" rejoined his lordship, casting another uneasy glance at his daughter, "and unfortunately girls won't see with their parents eyes."

"By Jove!" cried Theodore Hook, coming up, "I wish I could *un*fatigue myself. I shall exhale by to-morrow morning, my lord. There'll be nothing left of me but my debts!"

"There's one debt, Hook, you'll pay," said Lord Overdone.

"Oh! certainly, most certainly, the debt of nature!"

"That's the only one you will ever discharge," said his lordship, laughing.

"Consequently I shall ever remain your lordship's debtor," cried Hook, with emotion.

"I hope you will, Theodore," replied his lordship, pressing his hand.

Here Lady Overdone came up, leaning on the arm of the Mayor of Southampton.

"For heaven's sake do hurry them with the *collection*, Mr. Hook!" whispered her ladyship. "This poor man here is ravenous, and people are ready to eat one another."

"The cannibals!" cried Hook, hurrying off.

"I pity Hook," said Lord Overdone to the Countess. "His unbusiness-like habits render it impossible to provide for him as I could wish. But there's the gong!"

The collation was sumptuous. Lady Overdone cast a triumphant glance at the Countess, who was too much engrossed by the good things on the table to notice it.

CHAPTER V.

The Countess Trelawney returned from Eveden just in time to take her part in a scene not calculated to put her in the best of humours.

Happy in having got rid of Sir Alfred Fitzgerald's addresses, Lady Susan cheerfully devoted all her time and attention to her aunt, whose wretched temper and caprice made the task by no means a light one.

She had no idea that her mother, in her eagerness to secure Sir Alfred for a son-in-law, had intercepted her letter and written another, which still left the matter open. Lady Susan had just returned from taking a stroll while

her aunt dozed, when Sir Alfred was announced.

The Baronet had that morning received a threatening lettter from one of his creditors, which made Lady Susan's immediate acceptance of his proposals essential to his safety. That he should be able to obtain this, both his pride and his vanity forbade him doubting, and he had posted down to Southampton as fast as four horses could drag him.

"I ought to apologise for this intrusion at such an unusual hour," said Sir Alfred; "but the nature of my business must plead my apology."

"I am sorry mamma is not at home," said Lady Susan, greatly embarrassed. "Pray take a chair."

The Baronet noticed her emotion, and interpreting it favourably, led her to a sofa, and seated himself beside her. He thought he had never seen her looking so interesting.

"The Countess's absence," said he, "is immaterial. My business is with you."

"Of course I can have but one object in seeking this interview, my dear Lady Susan."

"I should have thought," said her ladyship, withdrawing her hand, "my letter would have rendered any interview superfluous."

"Your letter!" echoed the baronet, "what letter?"

"The letter I did myself the honour of addressing to you in reply to one I received from you."

"I never received your letter. The only letter I received was from the Countess, saying you would send me an answer as soon as you were at leisure. But I could bear this suspense no longer, so—"

"Then you have had no letter from me?" interrupted Lady Susan, rising.

"None whatever, I give you my honour,"

replied the baronet, following her. "It must have miscarried. But that is less important, as I can now receive your answer from your own lips."

Lady Susan was dreadfully embarrassed, for she could plainly see that her mother had never forwarded her letter to Sir Alfred, and that the latter was quite unprepared for the answer that awaited him. Misconstruing her hesitation, the baronet, again taking her hand, said, in a tone of mingled confidence and encouragement—

"Come, don't be afraid, my lovely girl. You know how sincerely I am attached to you, and that I am ready to do everything in my power to make you happy in your own way."

He attempted to raise her hand to his lips, but snatching it away, Lady Susan said—

"I regret the pain I am about to give you, Sir Alfred, but I must repeat what I said in my letter, namely, that whilst I am grateful to you for your good opinion, I lament that it is wholly out of my power to profit by it."

had given him her answer, "but it is better for both our sakes there should be no misunderstanding in this matter. You have my best wishes for your happiness. We had better not prolong an interview so painful to us both."

Sir Alfred detained her.

"One moment," said he, leading her to a chair. Then pacing the room for some seconds, alternately swayed by his pride and his necessities, he seated himself near her and continued—"I know you too well to suppose for a moment that you have said one word but what you strictly mean. But may not your decision be founded on a wrong impression? If you think I shall be arbitrary and exacting, at least towards yourself, you were never more mistaken in all your life, as I told my brother the other day.—Are you ill?"

"No, go on."

"Shall I ring for a glass of water?"

"By no means. Pray proceed."

"Well, then, as I told Herbert, I'm quite willing to give you *carte blanche*, because I know I can rely on your principles. You shall dictate the settlements. You shall be your own mistress absolutely. I shall not interfere with you in any way, and my estates present a wide field for your exertions. Your mother is as anxious for the connection as, you well know, my mother was during her lifetime; surely, my dear Lady Susan, my proposal is worthy far more consideration than you seem inclined to give it."

Lady Susan was silent. In truth, her thoughts at that moment were indeed far from Sir Alfred.

"You doubt my principles?" he proceeded, biting his lip. "You disapprove of my habits and present mode of life. You cannot be more opposed to them than I am myself. I detest them! I abjure them! I have long de-

continued he, throwing himself at her feet, "and you shall rule me as you please. I will be all you desire."

"With your course of life," said Lady Susan, gravely, "I can have nothing to do; neither does it become me to question whether you can renounce habits, long rooted, so suddenly, and so completely as you doubtless imagine you can. My resolution is based on considerations which more immediately and exclusively apply to myself," and again she attempted to leave, but Sir Alfred detained her.

"You love another?" said he, almost fiercely; "you love another? I'm sure. I'm certain you do; or you would never reject so decidedly and so peremptorily such an offer as mine. Say! do you not love another?"

"Sir Alfred," cried Lady Susan, indig-

nantly; "let me pass. Neither you nor any man has a right to put such a question to me."

"But answer it," pursued the baronet, with a sneer, still preventing her from passing. "Come, confess now, is there not some more fortunate man that—"

"Pray, Sir Alfred—"

"I insist—"

"Hey-day! What is the matter, good folks?" exclaimed the Countess, entering. "I heard you were here, Sir Alfred. Have you quarrelled?"

"I shall not stay to answer that question now," said Sir Alfred, seizing his hat. "I suspect your ladyship has not been upon honour with me."

"How do you mean?" enquired the Countess, reddening.

"Neither shall I answer that question," rejoined the baronet, sulkily; "my enquiries shall be prosecuted elsewhere, and if I find my suspicions correct," added he, darting a furious look at Lady Susan.

letters," said Sir Alfred, with a sneer, "there is no species of treachery we may not expect from them. But good evening, ladies. As I said before, I shall prosecute my enquiries elsewhere, and if I find I am right—Get out of my way, rascal!" and upsetting the man servant who was coming in with coffee, he left the house.

Great was the anger of the Countess Trelawney when she found that her daughter had refused Sir Alfred Fitzgerald.

"Well, Susan," she said, in a tone of reproach, "you've acted in this matter entirely for self, without the slightest regard to my wishes, and you must not complain, my dear, if I regulate my conduct for the future without in the least degree consulting yours. But what does Fitzgerald mean by saying I've played him false?"

"He suspects he has a favoured rival," replied Lady Susan, blushing; "and that you have encouraged him."

"That he should suspect he has a favoured rival," said her mother, snappishly, "is not to be wondered at. Your refusal of so splendid an offer is enough to make any man think that. But to suspect that I, of all people in the world, who have so much desired the union, and have gone such lengths to bring it about, should favour another, is perfectly absurd."

"Lengths indeed!" thought Lady Susan, but she said nothing.

Here Lady Bendish's Indian attendant came to say her mistress was awake, and had asked for Lady Susan.

"For mercy's sake go to her!" cried the Countess, "or there will be no peace in the house."

"How unfortunate," continued she, when her daughter had left the room. "How unfortunate my sister should be so ill, and come

entrance of Lord Alwaysailing.

"Hey-day!" cried the Countess; "what wind has brought you here?"

"An easterly wind," replied his lordship, pettishly; "the wind is always in the east when I want it in the west. I verily believe it blows purposely to annoy me," and putting his gloves and hat on the table, his lordship seated himself.

"Was the wind east this morning?"

"Of course it was," cried his lordship. "It always is when I cross the water from Cowes. It's positively ridiculous, it really is. There was just enough motion in the vessel to stir up the bile, without enabling one to get rid of it."

"Have a little brandy?"

"What's the use of brandy? It's of no more use than water. No, I must bear it as

well as I can. I'll be bound I shall not get rid of the sickness and headache for a couple of days. It's quite ridiculous, it really is."

"What took you to the Island?" enquired the lady.

"What should take me there?" replied his lordship, testily; "of course I went with Horace."

"The Duke is not worse, I hope?"

"He can never recover. Halford told me so only three days ago."

"You are heir presumptive, are you not?" asked the Countess, after a pause.

"I am," replied his lordship, with a grim smile; "just because I don't wish it. Ha! ha! ha! It's quite absurd, it really is. These things never happen to anyone but me. One would think my poor brother has determined to die for no other reason than to plague me. As if I hadn't enough bother with my own property, without being saddled with his. It's very disgusting, it really is."

manage such a property! Besides going to the House and opening one's doors to the political tag-rag-and-bobtail, to maintain the family interest. It's really ridiculous, isn't it?"

"You should divide the responsibility," said the Countess, laughing.

"What! marry!" exclaimed his lordship, horror struck. "Marry!"

"To be sure. What could you do better?"

"What could I do worse, you mean. Gad! that would be an Irish way of lightening the burden. You ladyship might as well advise me to hang myself. By-the-bye, I met Sir Alfred Fitzgerald on the pier. He was dreadfully in the blues, and no wonder, considering his ill-luck."

"His *good* luck, you should have said, according to your code," said the Countess,

smiling. "Did Sir Alfred tell you about it?"

"No," replied Lord Alwaysailing, "but it's very generally known now. It's the talk of the clubs."

"Impossible!" cried the Countess; "it has only just happened."

"My dear lady! How you talk! Why it happened upwards of a month since, at Copton Hall. The baronet was completely cleaned out by his gambling crew; knowing, as he is reputed to be—"

"Cleaned out!" echoed the lady, amazed.

"Completely! Lost every penny his mother left him. They say he must live on bread and water for at least four years. Do you know, it was reported Sir Alfred made your daughter an offer!"

"Did he?" said the Countess, walking to the window to conceal her emotion.

"Yes. I contradicted it at once. It's true Sir Alfred did dangle after her ladyship two seasons ago," I said, "but he's not a marry-

Fortune put that into your head."

"Why, I was mistaken, it seems, as he is going to India; but I always thought, and so did Pratt, that he must be the man. I'm quite sure, anybody who saw Fitzgerald and Lady Susan together would have taken them for lovers. I never rode through Isleham without meeting them, as it appeared to me, on the most affectionate footing; in fact, just as if they were man and wife. But I must leave," continued his lordship, dolefully. "Oh! what a bore it is, I've a hundred things to see after for Horace, and must be in town by day-break. Remember me to Lady Susan. Good-night."

"Good-night," said the Countess, on whom a new light seemed to have broken.

"Is it possible," soliloquised she, "that I've been such a buzzard, as not to see or not

to suspect what was daily passing under my very nose? But how could I imagine Susan would encourage a younger brother? or that Herbert would try to supplant Alfred. Susan's attachment to the latter would at once account for her refusing the former, which, as matters have turned out, is the very best thing she could have done. After all, it is Sir Alfred who has not been upon honour with me, and I shall trouble my head no more about him; but I must contrive to find out if Susan is attached to Herbert; it's very important!"

CHAPTER VI.

A PARAGRAPH in the "Morning Post" next day, enabled the Countess Trelawney to discover what she considered so important. She was poring over the fashionable intelligence, as was her daily custom, at breakfast, when she suddenly exclaimed—

"Dear me! I'm so sorry! Poor Major Fitzgerald!"

Lady Susan put down her cup, and turning as pale as ashes, looked at her mother.

"He'll be a sad loss to his friends," observed the latter, putting down the paper.

"Has anything serious happened to the

Major, mamma?" enquired the former, her lips quivering.

"Just as we had become acquainted with the poor fellow!" continued the mother, without noticing the question. "How very unfortunate?"

"Mamma!" exclaimed Lady Susan, with an agitation she found it impossible to suppress; "if Major Fitzgerald has met with any accident—if anything fatal has occurred—pray—"

"Oh! don't be alarmed, my love. There's no need to distress yourself about it," replied her mother, satisfied she had attained her object. "Major Fitzgerald is perfectly well, and in a whole skin, for what I know to the contrary. The paragraph merely says, 'Major Fitzgerald sails for India on Saturday.' He certainly is a very good sort of young man, and we shall miss him. That's all."

Lady Susan felt somewhat relieved, and assented to this, adding 'Major Fitzgerald's friends naturally felt interested in his wel-

them? No matter," she continued, seating herself at her desk, "I'll provide against the worst. She shall marry no younger brother at my expense. She can, of course, do as she likes. Yes, and so can I," and taking a pen she commenced a letter to her friend and legal adviser, instructing him to add a codicil to her will, at the same time telling him her reasons for doing so.

In the mean time Lady Susan gave full vent to her feelings in the solitude of her chamber. Sir Alfred's allusion to his brother had forcibly awakened her curiosity, and she had been busy ever since in conjecturing what could possibly have passed between them, in which, it was evident, she was principally concerned. Her mother's words, too, as she had intended, caused her great embarrassment. Though relieved in some measure by the assurance of

Fitzgerald's safety, the fact of his being about to quit England occasioned her great distress of mind, and she knelt down and prayed for strength to bear the separation with fortitude.

The Countess had just sealed her letter to her lawyer, and was about to direct it, when her servant entered with a note from Sir Alfred Fitzgerald.

"Booth waits for an answer, my lady," said the servant, leaving the room.

"Very well," replied his mistress, breaking the seal and reading the note, which contained an apology for his rude conduct, begging her ladyship to forgive him, and send a line by Booth.

The Countess accordingly wrote a cold, but polite assurance to that effect, a letter which would have irritated the baronet immensely had he ever received it. This, however, he did not, for her ladyship having sealed two notes, proceeded to direct both, in which, in her haste, she made a trifling mistake, which

to Lady Susan. As a preliminary step, he despatched, as we have seen, an apologetic note to the Countess, whose answer he impatiently awaited. The moment Booth entered, he snatched the note from him, and tearing open the envelope, read "My dear Mr.—"

Sir Alfred saw at once that this could not be meant for him. Extremely annoyed at the *contretemps* he was on the point of replacing the note in the envelope for the purpose of returning it, when his eye caught his own name. His curiosity was not proof against yielding to the temptation, and he read the paragraph, which was as follows:—"Most fortunately Susan had previously refused Sir Alfred, but her motive for doing so is, *I am convinced*, her attachment to Major Fitzgerald,

who has been base enough to abuse my hospitality by supplanting his brother, as he most effectively has done."

The baronet stood for some minutes in a sort of stupefaction by the intelligence. When he recovered his energies his first impulse was to re-read the sentence. Yes: there it was as clear as the sun at noonday. A most peculiar smile gradually stole over his features until it reached his eyes, which flashed like forked lightning. So fearful was the expression his countenance assumed that he absolutely shuddered as he caught the reflection of himself in the glass near which he was standing. At length he muttered—

"That scourge of my life again stands in my way, does he? Very well; I accept the situation as the phrase goes, and will make the most of it."

* * * * *

Putting the note carefully in his pocket he

ordered his carriage, and in less than ten minutes was on the road to London.

"It was very fortunate that fellow mistook you for your brother," said Sugden, as the two friends sat sipping their coffee in Berkeley Street, the evening after their adventure in the back slums, "or we should have got nothing out of him."

"I suppose not," replied Fitzgerald, "your conclusions were correct, and—"

"Yes! There's something wrong, depend on it," interrupted his friend; "very wrong indeed? and we must do our best to get at it. At present we have lost our only clue. But I shall keep my eyes open, and if the chapter of accidents presents anything—you saw Mrs. Wilson this morning?"

"Yes, and told her everything, as you advised. She quite agreed with you that there's something wrong. She has promised to communicate with you the moment she hears anything she deems it requisite you should know."

"Are you certain you can rely upon her discretion and fidelity."

"Implicitly; she loves me like a mother, and would go through fire and water to serve me. I'm thoroughly convinced of that. You see, Alfred is determined not to see me?"

"I suspect he went out of town on purpose to avoid an interview. Depend on it, he will not communicate with you personally, unless something very important should require his—

At this moment Sir Alfred unceremoniously entered the room.

"You are surprised to see me," he said, with a calmness quite at variance with his flashing eyes.

"Not more surprised than pleased, my dear Alfred," replied his brother. "I've been most anxious to see you, having, as you well know, business—"

"Your business must wait," replied Sir Alfred, rejecting the hand his brother offered him. "My business claims precedence—that admits of no delay. Don't go, Mr.

before Mr. Sugden, Alfred," said Herbert, becoming still more surprised at his brother's tone and bearing.

"Without further preface then," pursued the irate man, "you are a villain!"

"Fitzgerald!" cried the lawyer, interposing.

"Oh! don't be alarmed, Sugden," said his friend, coolly, "I will not forget that the madman before me is my brother."

"I repeat," cried Sir Alfred, hoarse with passion, "you are a villain! a deep, designing, undermining, treacherous villain?"

"Why do you apply those epithets to me?" enquired his brother.

"Ask your conscience?" said Sir Alfred, with a sneer. "You know you deserve them, you know you've supplanted—injured me in the tenderest point! robbed me of the affection of my affianced wife. Betrayed the embar-

rassed state of my affairs to her mother, and deprived me of her confidence and support. You know you have done this, viper that you are! Do you deny it."

"Most fully, distinctly, and unequivocally," replied Fitzgerald. "You are labouring under strange delusions, and I both pity and excuse you."

"Curse your pity!" cried the baronet, foaming with rage.

"Most sincerely do I pity you, because I know what pain the fallacy under which you are labouring must cause you; and I will do all in my power to dispel it, by assuring you most solemnly that there is not one particle of truth in all you charge me with. I never directly, or indirectly sought the affections of Lady Susan, nor have I mentioned your affairs to the Countess, though, knowing what I do, I am not quite certain that I ought not to have done so."

"There, you may make your mind easy,

villany. This letter, written by the Countess Trelawney, in confidence, to her man of business, but by mistake directed to me, not only distinctly charges him with having alienated Lady Susan's affection, but satisfies me he is the person indicated by the Countess to whom she is indebted for her knowledge of my losses, which that viper there was well aware of; you may read the letter if you please."

"Excuse me, Sir Alfred," replied Sugden coldly, "I am not in the habit of reading letters intended for others."

"As you please," replied the baronet, haughtily. "But as for that serpent there whom I hate—"

"I never gave you cause, Alfred," said his brother, calmly.

"Liar!" exclaimed the irate man, furiously, "you always cross my path and impede my progress, which ever way I turn. If you have the spirit to support your villany prove it!" and with this he struck his brother in the face with his glove.

The latter flushed crimson at this gross outrage, and before Sugden could prevent it, he seized his brother with a giant's grasp. The next moment he released his hold, saying sorrowfully—

"No! no! We lay together in the same womb; we were born of the same mother, and I will not hurt you, Alfred. God forgive you, as I do. God forgive us both!"

"Enough!" said his brother, with a triumphant smile. "You shall hear from me!" and with a diabolical expression defacing his features, Sir Alfred left the room.

Fitzgerald, throwing himself into a chair, gave way to the feelings which oppressed him.

"You must not meet him," said Sugden,

added he, looking up and smiling faintly, "I am a soldier, and have received a blow."

"True, from your own brother, which surely renders it not imperative on you to resent?"

"I have certainly no wish to do so," replied the soldier. "I have already forgiven the insult; but as a member of a profession peculiarly tenacious of its honour, it is impossible for me entirely to overlook it, and I must have an apology from Alfred, which, as he is my brother, I may with propriety accept."

"No doubt of it," cried Sugden, seizing his hat. "I'll go to your brother instantly, represent the thing to him properly, and—"

"Do," interrupted his friend. "I wish you would—though I fear it will be to no purpose. You saw the dreadful look he gave

me as he left the house. I wish I had not laid hands upon him."

"So do I," replied Sugden. "That complicates the affair. It has given him a hold over you, of which, I fear, he is but too much disposed to take advantage."

"You imagine, then, that he came resolved to pick a mortal quarrel with me?" asked the Major.

Sugden had little doubt, in his own mind, that such was the case, but merely said—

"I will do my best to arrange matters between you, and trust I shall succeed, for I cannot imagine that when I have put the affair before Sir Alfred, he—"

Jackson at this moment announced Captain Beresford.

"I am sorry to be the bearer of this," said the Captain, handing a letter to Fitzgerald.

"I beg you will make no apology, Captain," replied the latter. "Be seated. You see," continued Fitzgerald, handing the letter to Sugden, after he had read it. "You see, we

adjoining.

In about a quarter of an hour Sugden called his friend into the room. The Captain was gone.

"Well?" said Fitzgerald, anxiously.

"I wish it were well, with all my soul!" cried Sugden. "Your brother is devoid of feeling. All the arguments I could advance had no effect whatever. Captain Beresford had no discretionary power. He was simply to arrange a meeting."

"Which I hope you did!" cried the Major, eagerly. "In these cases there is nothing so distressing as suspense."

"True," replied Sugden, sorrowfully; "so we settled that six to-morrow morning, and Chalk Farm should be the hour and place. I will call upon you at five punctually. Have you pistols?'

"Yes."

"And Jackson can be depended on?"

"Certainly."

"Good. Now, my dear Fitzgerald, is there anything that I can do for you?"

"Nothing, I thank you. Fortunately you are my executor and know all my affairs. You see," continued he, smiling; "how right a thing it is to make one's will."

"True," rejoined Sugden, cheerfully. "But I trust, in spite of all your brother has said and done, we shall be able to accommodate matters yet, and in that expectation I leave you. At five I will be here again," and pressing each other's hands warmly, they parted.

CHAPTER VII.

At all times to wake early in the morning, when the rain is coming down in pitiless torrents, is by no means pleasant, but to wake from a pleasant dream on such a morning in order to rise early to fight a duel is to render the waking still more bitter, and the more especially when your antagonist is your own brother—and that brother has determined it shall be a mortal encounter.

Fitzgerald had often had to turn out on a much worse morning to encounter a foe. But the call, on the present occasion, lacked that moral support and stimulus which hitherto he had always felt, when summoned to the

battle-field in the performance of his duties as a soldier. He had made up his mind, that, under no circumstances, would he return his brother's fire. With a heavy heart he made his toilette, and then falling on his knees, he implored God to protect him from his brother's reckless act, and to forgive that brother should he fall by his hand.

"Jackson," he said, as his faithful servant came into the room; "if anything happens to me, you'll find I have provided for you."

"God in heaven bless and preserve you, Major!" exclaimed the faithful fellow, who was an Irishman. "And he will too! Sure, I'd back your honor ag'in all Ireland, lave alone the likes o' him! But Mr. Sugden's waiting below in a hackney coach, sir. I've put the pistols in."

Drinking a cup of coffee, Fitzgerald joined his friend, and Jackson springing on the box, they proceeded at a rapid pace to Chalk Farm.

"People are always punctual when they

contained a medical man, a friend of Sugden's, whose attendance this latter had considered it right and prudent to secure.

Few words passed, both principals and seconds were too much occupied with their own thoughts to feel disposed to be communicative. As they approached Chalk Farm the sun broke out, shining as brilliantly as if no angry passions raged within the bosom of those who were assembling, to perpetrate a deed of blood, in defiance of all laws, both human and divine.

The baronet and his second were already on the field.

"Surely," said Sugden, taking Captain Beresford aside—"Surely this matter can be accommodated? So nearly connected as the parties are, we ought not to allow them to proceed to extremities."

"I quite agree with you," replied the Captain; "and have exhausted all my rhetoric in trying to persuade my principal to look upon it in that light, but in vain. I regret to say, Mr. Sugden, the affair must proceed. There is no help for it. Be pleased to place your man."

"Well, if I must, I suppose I must. Which pistols shall we use?"

The preliminaries were soon arranged, and the two brothers stood opposite to each other. Sugden put a pistol in his friend's hand, which he warmly pressed. The signal was given, as agreed upon, by Beresford dropping his pocket handkerchief, which was scarcely done ere Sir Alfred, with a steady eye and prompt hand, had fired. Fitzgerald discharged his weapon in the air, and staggering fell.

Both seconds ran immediately to the wounded man's assistance, as did Jackson and the medical man, as well as the surgeon the Baronet had brought with him, all three

had been watching the proceedings from a short distance.

The blood slowly issued from a wound in Fitzgerald's side, and both surgeons looked serious after examining it.

"Any danger?" whispered Beresford to Sir Alfred's surgeon.

"I fear so. The wound is an ugly one."

"Is that your opinion?" pursued the Captain, anxiously, and was going to Sir Alfred, when Fitzgerald beckoned him, and said with difficulty—

"Consult your safety, and tell Alfred I forgive him."

"I will not fail to do so," replied the Captain, and pressing Fitzgerald's hand, he rejoined his principal, who still kept his ground. After exchanging a few words with his second, Sir Alfred raised his hat and bowed, and they left the place together.

Fitzgerald was removed to the nearest inn. The pain he felt was excruciating, and he fainted as they placed him on a bed.

"I knew it would end thus," said Jackson, almost broken-hearted, and fearfully enraged into the bargain. "I knew it would be thus when I saw him reserve his fire. Why didn't he crack into him at once, as he ought to have done? What was the use of being generous to the likes of him? But that's always the way with the Major. He thinks of every body but himself. By my soul! I believe he'd hold a toadstool over a frog in a shower of rain to keep the cratur from catching the rheumatics."

So true was this, that the moment the wounded man could articulate, he persisted, in spite of all the surgeon's remonstrances, in urging Sugden to provide for his own safety, which the latter, to pacify his friend, was compelled to do.

Next morning the surgeon succeeded in extracting the ball; but fever supervened, and Fitzgerald's recovery was considered hopeless.

Though confident in the strength of Major

position.

Fortunately it was the long vacation, and the courts were not opened; but perceiving that his presence only excited the sufferer, Sugden kept out of sight, cautioning Jackson not to betray his concealed vicinity. Sugden wrote to Maud Anstruther, apprising her of his friend's deplorable state, and his inability to go into the country to see her for a short time, as he had promised.

The following morning brought a letter from Mrs. Wilson to Jackson, earnestly imploring him to let her know by the first post how "Master Herbert" was going on, adding that she would have come to nurse him, but it was impossible for her to leave the premises.

Three days passed without any perceptible improvement in the patient. The physician

who had been called in, in answer to Sugden's inquiries, shook his head, but declined giving an opinion. On the fourth day, however, symptoms of improvement were visible. The fever and delirium abated. Fitzgerald's sleep was less disturbed, and his wound less painful. The favourable change continued, and on the eighth day he was pronounced out of danger, to the inexpressible joy of Sugden.

"I've no doubt of his recovery now," said the physician, "provided he be kept perfectly quiet. It will, however, from the nature of his wound, be a tedious case."

"Then, what about his going to India?" asked Sugden.

"Quite out of the question—quite; must not be thought of. It's a great pity, for with his talents and military reputation, he would have taken a distinguished place in India."

"No doubt of it," said Sugden.

"It's very sad the brothers cannot be upon more amicable terms."

out. He did so with the greatest possible reluctance; and as you know, he did not return his brother's fire."

The physician nodded. "You forget," said he, with a smile, "I was retained by the other side, though serving on this. But one thing I will say, I have never seen in the whole course of my professional experience, and that, as you may imagine, Mr. Sugden, is neither a short nor a narrow one, a patient with such an entire abnegation of self as in Major Fitzgerald!"

"The best fellow, with the best heart in the world," exclaimed Sugden, with warmth.

"Well, you're a good fellow, too," said the physician, pressing the lawyer's hand. "Few men would have run the risk for a friend that you have done, I can assure you."

"And few physicians would have displayed

the humanity you have," pursued Sugden, returning the pressure.

"Then we're all good fellows together," said the physician, laughing. "The Law, the Army, and Medicine are worthily represented by such a trio. But remember, your friend must not winter in England. He must go to Spa as soon as he is able to bear the journey. Good morning."

Sugden, delighted beyond measure, hastened to write to Maud Anstruther, to communicate the good news; but he had scarcely placed the writing paper before him, when he was summoned down stairs by Jackson, who informed him that two ladies, muffled up in wrappers, and thick veils over their faces, wished to speak with him in the parlour.

"Do you know who they are, Jackson?" enquired Sugden.

"They didn't give their names, sir; but I can give a good guess," replied Jackson.

"Well, whom do you guess they are?"

"If I've got a head on my shoulders, I'd

"Servant, sir!" said the maid, for she it was who spoke. "We were passing promiscuously, as I may say—me and this lady here—and knowing some friends of poor Major Fitzgerald, sir, we—"

"In short, sir," said the other female, advancing—

"Now, pray, ma'am don't interfere," whispered the maid, almost angrily. "You know you promised you wouldn't. If you do—"

"Won't you be seated, ladies?" said Sugden, placing chairs.

"No, thankee, sir," replied the maid. "We're in a hurry; we haven't a moment to spare—but as I was saying, sir, knowing some friends of the Major's, whom we expect for to see, we thought, as we happened, by the greatest chance in the world, to be passing, we might as well—"

"Look in and enquire how the Major was going on," said Sugden, coming to her assistance.

"That's just it, sir," rejoined the maid; "so now you know all about it."

"Well, then, you may tell those kind friends who are interested in Major Fitzgerald's welfare," pursued Sugden, "that the physician, whose carriage you must have met, has just pronounced him out of all danger, provided—"

"Thank God!" exclaimed the other female, fervently. "Oh! Mr. Sugden, what a weight you have taken off my mind!"

"Pray, ma'am," said the maid.

"Oh! don't be alarmed!" rejoined Lady Susan, whose *incognito* it is useless to preserve. "I know I am safe with Mr. Sugden."

"You do me more than justice, madam," replied the lawyer, respectfully.

"I'm sure of it—I'm quite convinced of it," pursued her ladyship, still keeping down her veil, "or I should hardly have ventured

on this visit. The truth is, Mr. Sugden," continued she, eagerly, though with obvious embarrassment, "I consider myself, indirectly, at least, the cause of all that has happened. You will not wonder, therefore, putting common humanity out of the question, that I have felt the greatest possible anxiety to—to—"

"I quite comprehend both your feelings and motives, madam," answered Sugden, "and respect and admire you for them. To me, at least, no explanation or apology is requisite."

"I see, Mr. Sugden does not belie the good opinion I've always had of him," said Lady Susan, "and I trust he will allow me, henceforth, to rank him among my friends."

"It is an honour I have long coveted, madam," answered the lawyer, bowing, "and I trust I shall never do anything to forfeit it."

"It is impossible to tell you all I've suffered, Mr. Sugden," continued Lady Susan,

"since Captain Beresford wrote, informing us of what had occurred; and enclosing the letter, the misdirecting of which was the immediate cause of the duel. We only returned from Southampton yesterday, and reports were so alarming, that I seized the opportunity of mamma's going to London with my aunt to ascertain their correctness."

"And we must be quick, my lady, in returning," said the maid advancing, "if the Countess gets home before us all the fat will be in the fire."

"Right," replied her mistress, smiling. "We've no time to lose; so good morning, Mr. Sugden. Perhaps you'll be good enough to let us know how your patient progresses."

"I'll not fail to do so," said Sugden, pressing the hand Lady Susan held out to him.

"Is there anything I can do or send?" asked her ladyship, pausing. "I trust your patient has all that—"

"Yes! all. Pray make your mind easy on that point. The physician who attends is

be sure to keep my secret? You—you'll oblige me particularly, Mr. Sugden, by not mentioning this visit, particularly to your patient. You will promise me this?"

"Most assuredly," rejoined the lawyer. "Your ladyship's wishes are commands. Pray have no uneasiness on that score," and giving her his arm he led her to the hired hackney coach she had come in.

"So," soliloquised Sugden, when they had driven off, "I see Sir Alfred had more cause to be jealous than I suspected. I'm half tempted to let Fitzgerald know of this visit. It would do him more good than the whole College of Physicians. But I've pledged my word, and must not break it. Now to write to Maud, and then set poor dear old Wilson's mind at rest about 'Master Herbert.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

Two years have passed since the events narrated in the last chapter. The scene is Lausanne.

Two travellers stood at the door of the Hotel ——, waiting for their *vetturino*.

"English, I'll take my oath," exclaimed the latter, drawing his companion's attention to two ladies who were passing in a carriage. "What a remarkably beautiful girl the younger one is! Surely I have seen her before, Beresford?"

"My dear fellow! that's Lady Susan Trelawney," whispered the latter, getting behind his friend, "I wouldn't have her see me.

about her," interrupted Sir Robert. "How deuced well she's looking! Handsomer than ever, by Jove!"

"Yes. Her black dress sets off her complexion charmingly."

"Do you know who she is in mourning for, Beresford?"

"Her mother, the Duchess of Ilford," replied his companion, looking at his watch.

"The Duchess of Ilford!" echoed Sir Robert, "why, that's the woman who tricked poor Alwaysailing into matrimony, isn't it?"

"Yes; she made him marry her, whether he would or not. The breath was scarcely out of his elder brother's body ere she commenced her wily arts."

"Oh! I remember quite well," pursued Sir Robert, laughing. "I never enjoyed anything more in my life. So she's dead, is she?'

"Yes, dead about nine months since," replied Captain Beresford, "she didn't enjoy her ducal coronet long."

"Where's the Duke now?"

"On the Continent, somewhere," said Beresford, "but Lady Susan, since the marriage of her mother, has resided here with her aunt, Lady Bendish."

"What, that languishing little lady she's riding with, who looks as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth?" said Sir Robert.

"Appearances are deceitful," replied the Captain, "meek as that little lady looks, she's a downright Tartar. Her greatest delight is to make every body miserable about her, and she knows well how to do it. I'm told she leads poor Lady Susan the devil's own life."

"What a pity!" cried Sir Robert, "why doesn't Lady Susan leave her?"

"Because she's nearly, if not entirely dependent on her aunt."

"The deuce! how came that?"

"Why her mother disinherited her, because

see you?" enquired the baronet, when the ladies were past.

"My dear Sir Robert, what a question!" exclaimed his companion, "when you know I was Sir Alfred Fitzgerald's second in that duel which—"

"Ah! I see now," interrupted Sir Robert. "For her sake you would not revive disagreeable recollections. By-the-bye, Beilby tells me he met Major Fitzgerald the other day, looking as well as ever."

"I'm sincerely glad to hear it," said Beresford, again looking at his watch. "Fitzgerald acted nobly in that miserable affair—and—what the deuce detains Simeon? Will he never bring the carriage round?"

"My dear fellow," said the baronet, "never interfere with a *vetturino*. Depend on it he'll always do what's best—for his horses. But

tell me, is all they say of Sir Alfred Fitzgerald, true.

"What have you heard?"

"Oh! all sorts of queer things," said the baronet, "that he has turned miser—misanthrope — never shaves or washes — denies himself the commonest necessaries, and lives, or rather starves in a wretched, ruinous, old farm house on his estate in Cumberland, seeing no one but his man of business, and the old crone who, in common parlance, does for him. In short, I am told, that from being one of the best dressed men about town, he has become the dirtiest and most repulsive person imaginable."

"Well, it's all true," said Beresford, "I heard the story from his man of business. When we returned from Brussels, after the duel, Sir Alfred found all his horses, and all his moveables that were not heirlooms, had been sold by his creditors, and he was dreadfully in want of ready money, which none of the Jews would lend him. In this fix, he

farm where he has vegetated ever since."

"What has become of his valet, Booth?" enquired Sir Robert.

"Oh! Overdone took Booth," rejoined Beresford. "Trusty fellow Booth! But here's the carriage, jump in. We must reach Neufchatel to-night."

The villa occupied by Lady Bendish commanded a magnificent view of Lake Lausanne, with the snow-capped mountains on the Italian side. A stream, clear, full, and gushing, ran through the grounds, which were laid out with exquisite taste, and kept in perfect order, under the superintendence of Lady Susan Trelawney. In short, the place was a perfect Paradise, and like the first Paradise, had its devil.

And, yet, to look at Lady Bendish you would have thought her all sweetness. She

was a soft, meek, dove-eyed, delicate little body, with the mildest voice, and the sweetest smile imaginable. But she was a drone with a sting; so idle, that she would never do the slightest thing for herself; so cruel, that she had often in India, when she lacked amusement, ordered in a slave for the express purpose of tormenting him. Lady Bendish knew how to adapt the art of tormenting to all ranks, ages, and capacities. If you had a raw, she was sure to find it out, and when she had, the Lord have mercy upon you, for her ladyship would not.

It was a white day for her husband when illness obliged Lady Bendish to leave for England, and he willingly made her a large allowance to keep her there. Lady Susan, as we have seen, devoted herself to her aunt on her arrival in England, and when her mother married, she accompanied her to Lausanne, where they had resided ever since.

Like most persons who had lived in India,

ment proved invaluable. If her niece was necessary to Lady Bendish she was also in a great measure dependent upon her, a fact of which her ladyship was quite aware, and the consequences of such knowledge on a person of Lady Bendish's peculiar idiosyncracy, are evident; she worried Lady Susan almost beyond endurance.

Lady Bendish was by no means unmindful of her creature comforts. She was reclining on a sofa, and on the table by her side was a large plateful of grapes, which she was devouring. She never forgot her own comforts, however much she neglected those of others.

"Susan!" she exclaimed, in her softest tone; "Susan, my darling."

The latter, who was busily arranging some accounts at another table, looked up.

"I was thinking," proceeded her ladyship,

her mouth full of grapes; "and you cannot imagine how the recollection distresses me! I was thinking how very unfortunate it was that you ever confessed to my poor sister, your love for Major Fitzgerald."

"I never made any such confession, aunt," replied the niece, coolly; "most extraordinary if I had. How often must I repeat that I never was guilty of the indelicacy of acknowledging a preference for a gentleman who never addressed me."

"Did you ever tell me this before, my love?" enquired the aunt.

"Yes, frequently."

"Bless me, what a head I must have," continued the tormentress. "I hadn't the least idea I had ever mentioned the subject before. Heaven knows I'm the last person in the world to annoy or injure any one. But, my darling!" continued she, a sure sign that something stinging was coming; "if no love-making ever took place between you and the Major, how came Lord Alwaysailing to say

dignantly. "My foot slipped in getting over a stile just as his lordship was passing, and if Major Fitzgerald had not caught me, I must have fallen. As to the kiss you charge him with, it's perfectly absurd; Major Fitzgerald is too well bred and too much the gentleman to indulge in such freedoms."

"Ah! to be sure—to be sure, that must have been it. Besides, if he did snatch a kiss as a reward—"

"But he didn't! He didn't!" exclaimed Lady Susan, still more indignantly. "I repeat, Major Fitzgerald was too much of a gentleman to dream of such an impropriety."

"Of course he was—of course he was. Military men never do such things," rejoined Lady Bendish, charmed with the pain she was inflicting. "Still I'm sadly puzzled in this affair, my darling!" continued she, lounging

on the sofa again; "for I distinctly recollect my sister's telling me, just before we were obliged to leave Southampton in such a hurry, on account of the duel, when I was wholly unfit for such a journey, I perfectly recollect her telling me that you had as good as acknowledged to her you loved the Major; that she was convinced of it herself is a fact her will sufficiently testifies. How do you reconcile these anomalies, my dearest love?" concluded her ladyship, smiling.

Lady Susan winced at this home thrust. She recollected the agitation she had evinced when her mother's artifice caused a betrayal of her feelings, and was silent for a time. At length she said—

"I can only repeat what I have so often affirmed, namely, that I have never so far forgotten what is due to decorum and my sex, as to acknowledge a partiality for a gentleman who, perhaps, has never thought of me."

"But if you hadn't a sneaking kindness for the Major, my darling," pursued her aunt,

than double my age, and a notorious *roué*. Such a man ought never to have been proposed to me. I would have starved rather than have married him."

"And you must have starved, sweetest, if it hadn't been for me!" rejoined her aunt, laying on the lash still more vigorously. "Surely it would have been better to have put up with his lordship, who died six months after, when you would have had a large jointure, and then—good heavens! how happy you would have been, at perfect liberty to marry the Major, which you can't do now, you know, my sweetest pet, without forfeiting the beggarly annuity which—

Her ladyship did not finish her sentence, for Lady Susan, tortured beyond endurance, rushed out of the room into the grounds, and,

sinking on a seat, gave vent to the indignation which oppressed her.

"Unfeeling woman!" she exclaimed, "as blind to your own interest as you are wanton in your cruelty. You will drive from you the only person who takes any interest in your welfare. Yes! I must leave her," she continued. "It is impossible for me, without forfeiting my self-respect, to endure such treatment any longer. Small as my means are they will be sufficient for all my wants. Oh! Fitzgerald! Fitzgerald! you little know the indignities I have suffered, the harshness I have endured on your account; and if you did, perhaps you wouldn't care."

"How can you do me such injustice, my dear Lady Susan," exclaimed a voice, and looking up she saw—Fitzgerald himself.

CHAPTER IX.

We must account for Major Fitzgerald's appearance at this moment.

As his physician had predicted, his health continued to improve, and as soon as he was able to bear the journey, he proceeded by easy stages to Spa, accompanied by Jackson, having previously sold his commission, funded the proceeds with the rest of his property, and given his agent a power of attorney to receive his dividends. Sugden would have accompanied his friend to his destination, but Fitzgerald insisted on his fulfilling his engagement to Maud Anstruther, to whom, in the

course of the following year, he was happily united.

Sugden continued to keep Fitzgerald *au fait* of all that was passing in England. He also called regularly on Mrs. Wilson, who remained in charge of the mansion in Portman Square. Nothing had been heard of Singleton.

"This is a hard nut to crack," observed Sugden, in writing of the mystery connected with this person, "but I hope to live, for your sake, to crack it."

But the lawyer's last letter contained intelligence which acted powerfully on Fitzgerald, and which, for the information of our readers, we give in full.

"Business," wrote Sugden, "obliged me to go to Doctors' Commons to consult the late Duchess of Ilford's will, by which I discovered, to my great astonishment, that she had only left Lady Susan Trelawney an annuity of two hundred pounds a-year. This paltry provision, strange to say, her ladyship

Susan from a situation in which she is notoriously unhappy.

"Secondly—Because it is well worth Lady Susan's while to sacrifice her annuity for the name and protection you can offer her.

"Thirdly—Because you are not only sincerely attached to each other, but eminently calculated to make each other happy.

"Fourthly—Because it will materially increase the happiness of Maud and myself; and,

"Fifthly and lastly—Because I shall get a thumping fee for drawing out the marriage settlements.

"'But how do you know I am in love with Lady Susan Trelawney?' you will ask. 'I never opened my lips to any human being on the subject.' Ah! my dear fellow! you

forget. In a delirium we often utter that, unconsciously, which in our senses we carefully keep preserved in the deep recesses of our hearts, and for three whole days and nights after the duel you raved of Lady Susan incessantly. That she loves you I have evidence equally convincing, but which it would be a breach of confidence to adduce. Hasten, then, my dear friend, to the rescue of your ladye love! Like a true knight release the sweet creature from the persecution she is daily, nay hourly enduring. Let no fastidious or unnecessary scruples prevent you from accomplishing, with as little delay as possible, the union of two beings so admirably calculated to ensure each other's happiness."

Six hours after receiving the letter Fitzgerald was *en route* for Lausanne.

It was some time before Lady Susan Trelawney recovered from the agitation Fitzgerald's sudden and unexpected appearance had occasioned. When she had, in

"The words I overheard," said Fitzgerald, seating himself, and taking her hand, "induce me to hope that my presence is not altogether undesirable, or I should bitterly regret the presumption I have been guilty of, in obtruding on your privacy."

"It would be affectation to say I am not glad to see you," replied Lady Susan, blushing, but not withdrawing her hand, "for, in truth, I never needed the council and support of a friend so much as I do at this present moment, Major Fitzgerald."

"If you will allow me to claim that title," returned the Major, warmly, "you shall have both counsel and support, so far as I am able to afford them. Indeed, it is for that very purpose you see me here."

"Is it possible that—"

"It is, my dearest Lady Susan," rejoined Fitzgerald, with considerable eagerness. "That you may at once comprehend my reasons and motives for making this journey, as well as the expectations I base upon it, read this," and he put Sugden's letter into her hand.

When Lady Susan had perused it, which she did with a varying cheek, Fitzgerald proceeded—

"From the moment I saw you, I loved you; but it was not until my brother had actually made his proposals that I became aware of the nature of my feelings, when I instantly avoided you. Now, there is every reason why I should seek you, and I have done so, anxious to support, comfort, and protect you. Say! will you, can you consent to give me a legal title to do so?"

This realization of her most ardent wishes, when she least expected it, was too much for Lady Susan in the present distressed state of her mind. She turned pale, and must have

I cannot conceal from you, if I would, the satisfaction and happiness your proposal has afforded me. There's my hand, dear Fitzgerald. Alas! it is all now I have to offer you. I am poor in everything, but my love for you," she added in a soft voice.

The reader must imagine Fitzgerald's answer; if he cannot he's a dull dog, and deserves to be kept in ignorance, as a reward for his obtuseness.

"You must leave me now," said Lady Susan, disengaging herself from Fitzgerald's encircling arms. "I am not equal at this moment to the discussing our future plans. Does my aunt know you are here?"

"No. I've not been to the house. I caught a glimpse of you as I entered the grounds, and—

"Then you had better go as you came," interrupted her Ladyship. "As things are it will be best. Let me see you again in the evening."

"At what hour?"

"Eight."

"Adieu, dearest! I will be punctual."

Stealing up to her chamber, Lady Susan threw herself on her knees, and fervently expressed her gratitude to God for permitting such a prospect of rational happiness to open upon her, when she least expected it. This done, she dressed and went down to dinner, in a frame of mind which defied all the efforts of her aunt to ruffle. That amiable personage, who was a great *gourmand*, after satisfying the wants of her stomach, proceed to regale herself, as usual, by annoying her niece.

"Why did you run away, my darling, in such a hurry?" she began, with her accustomed mellifluousness, "I'm sure I said nothing you need have taken huff at. If you're so sensitive about Major Fitzgerald—"

of any one else.

"To be sure you are. Why shouldn't you, my dearest," pursued Lady Bendish, biting her honied lip. "I say nothing but what is for your good, you know, and a man who picks a quarrel with his elder brother, for the chance of shooting him, that he himself may come into the title and estates, you'll allow he is not exactly the person, my dear, that a young woman should be fond of."

"And did Major Fitzgerald really do this?" exclaimed Lady Susan, smiling again. "What a bad boy he must be! What comes next in the catalogue of the Major's crimes? It is requisite I should know, for to use your own expression, my dear aunt, I confess I have a sneaking kindness for him."

"Oh! at last you admit it, do you?" exclaimed Lady Bendish, provoked beyond

measure. "You admit it, do you? You admit your partiality for an assassin—a wicked wretch who has been the cause of your ruin, and brought you to the miserable state of dependence in which you now are!"

"Pitiable enough, heaven knows, my dear aunt," said Lady Susan, much amused, "but you know the old adage, 'that when things come to the worst they must mend;' and let us hope this will be my case."

"Your case, indeed!" cried her aunt, jumping up in a rage; then with effort controlling herself, she walked out of the room without another word.

At eight o'clock precisely, Major Fitzgerald was announced.

"Now, dearest, let us talk over our future plans," said he, leading Lady Susan to a sofa. "Does your aunt know of my arrival?"

"No," replied her ladyship, laughing. "That's a pleasure in store for her. You cannot form the most remote notion what a favourite you are with her."

"Indeed! I suppose I must be very much obliged to her," said Fitzgerald, laughing.

"Not that she really hates you," pursued her ladyship, "she depreciates *you* merely to annoy *me;* indeed her conduct is so aggravating that—"

"It is extraordinary that any human being should have the heart to treat you ill!" interrupted the Major, tenderly."

"Oh!" said Lady Susan, "were all the world as kind, as considerate, as disinterested as you—"

Fitzgerald stopped her mouth—how the reader must imagine.

"Of course you don't mean to continue with your aunt?" he said.

"Not a day, not an hour longer than is absolutely necessary," replied Lady Susan.

"I have done everything in my power to please and propitiate my aunt, but such is the peculiarity of her nature, that no attention has any effect upon her; and much as I regret leaving an only relation, who is so little able to manage for herself—"

"I regret it too, my dear!" interrupted Fitzgerald, "but the necessity exists. I see no reason why you should sacrifice yourself to administer to the comforts, and watch over the interests of one, who only repays the obligation with cruelty and insult. Where do you think of going?"

"To Monsieur Delpoin."

"Who is Monsieur Delpoin?"

"The gentleman from whom my aunt hires this place. He has often expressed his indignation at my aunt's conduct towards me, and offered me an asylum at his house, whenever her cruelty compelled me to leave her protection."

"Good fellow! I must be introduced to him," said Fitzgerald.

estimable. If Monsieur Delpoin cannot receive me, I have no doubt he can recommend some respectable family with whom I could board for the present."

"It will not be for long," said Fitzgerald. "I've seen the English minister—another staunch friend of yours. I told him I should soon require his services. His answer was, 'The sooner the better—the sooner the better,' and I quite agree with him."

"Hush! I hear my aunt!" cried Lady Susan, blushing; she would have risen, but Fitzgerald detained her.

"Let her see us as we are," he said, "it will save a hundred awkward questions; besides, with such an enemy it is always best to take the initiative."

The door opened, and Lady Bendish sailed in, but stopped as she caught sight of the lovers.

"Good evening, madam!" said the Major. "Pray come in. You will not interrupt us. We've said all we have to say to each other, and settled everything. Susan, have the kindness to introduce me."

"This is Major Fitzgerald, aunt," said the latter, who with difficulty kept from laughing. "The gentleman your ladyship was pleased to name in such flattering terms after dinner to-day."

"I judged as much," replied her ladyship, recovering her mellifluousness. "This accounts for your extraordinary good humour, darling, which now I quite understand."

"I request your felicitations, madam," said the Major. "I have asked your niece to become my wife, and she has not refused me."

"Indeed!" said Lady Bendish, smiling, "you've lost no time; and so far I congratulate *you*. I congratulate my niece too, on the splendid prospect such a union opens to her —a union so advantageous to her in every respect. She will have little cause to regret

Our food may, nay, will lack that peculiar sharp sauce with which your ladyship is wont to season your more *récherché* dishes."

"Perhaps so, my sweetest love," returned her aunt, still retaining her honied words. "Nevertheless, as your only relation living, I shall take the liberty, my darling, however much I may regret the necessity of hurting this gentleman's feelings, to—"

"Pray don't regard my feelings, madam," cried Fitzgerald, "I am not afraid that anything your *ladyship* can say will cause me the slightest pain."

"In that case then," resumed her ladyship, with one of her most deliciously honied smiles, "I've less reluctance in admonishing my niece not to unite herself to one who has been the sole cause of reducing her to her present degraded condition."

"Degraded!" said the Major.

"Degraded!" exclaimed her ladyship.

"Degraded!" echoed Lady Susan. "Degraded, indeed! since it subjects the man I love and honour to such an insult, the repetition of which I shall prevent by quitting this hated house instantly."

"As you please, my sweet niece," said her aunt, delighted at the effect of her last shaft. "If you choose to throw yourself away on a beggar, you are quite at liberty to do so."

And having uttered these words, she left the room.

"I quite approve of your determination," said Fitzgerald. "I will go for a carriage, and accompany you to your friend Monsieur Delpoin's at once."

CHAPTER X.

THE residence of Monsieur Delpoin was situated on the Geneva Road, about a league from Lausanne. The family, consisting of himself, his wife, and two grown up sons, received Lady Susan with delight, and the best apartment in the house was immediately prepared for her reception.

When the Delpoins were acquainted with the cause of her sudden arrival, they were exceedingly indignant; and Madame Delpoin, embracing Lady Susan affectionately, begged she would look upon her as the friend or relation she had failed to find in her aunt. As

for the Major, in less than ten minutes he was seated at the fire with the kitten on his knee.

Excited by the events of the day, Lady Susan soon retired to her chamber; and Fitzgerald, after promising to breakfast with the family the following morning, returned to the hotel where he had taken up his quarters.

A night's rest restored Lady Susan's tranquillity. The first sound she heard on awaking was her lover's voice under her window. She lost no time in joining him, and during a delightful stroll in the adjoining vineyard, it was settled that that day month should complete their happiness.

The breakfast formed a pleasing epoch in their present existence. Such coffee, such cream, such omelettes, such grapes, served on a table-cloth as white as snow, garnished as everything was by the smiles and genial hospitality of their warm-hearted friends, furnished a meal such as Lady Susan, vexed and worried as she had been by the honied gall

"Yes, I'm too happy to talk."

The Delpoins were a very happy, united family. The estate upon which they resided had been in the possession of the family for centuries, and Mr. Delpoin enjoyed the friendship of all his neighbours, rich and poor. His wife and sons, too, were deservedly respected. These latter assisted their father in the management of the estate—a labour of love—which while it furnished them all with sufficient employment, left them ample leisure for study and acquiring those accomplishments, without a taste for which they might have degenerated into mere boors in cultivation of the soil. In the evening, when the business of the day was over, they all assembled in the principal *salon*, and concluded a day of moderate labour with reading or music, in which latter science they were all more or

less skilled; and in those family concerts both Lady Susan and Fitzgerald, who naturally passed most of his time with the family, proved no mean acquisition.

In truth, these amiable Swiss were delighted with their guests. Madame Delpoin, to her astonishment, discovered in Lady Susan what she never expected in one so highly born and highly bred, an able and zealous coadjutor in the duties of her own department, in which Lady Susan eagerly took her share. As for Fitzgerald, he was soon established as an especial favourite with every living thing, man, bird, and beast, about the establishment, and Monsieur Delpoin, who knew the world well, and was well fitted to form a judgment, speedily found his kindly and pleasing qualities were combined with others of a higher and still more valuable description.

The Major, on his part, was no less pleased with everybody and everything he beheld. He witnessed, in actual operation, much that

turn to England. He felt, however, that his original plan required to be greatly modified; that some occupation was absolutely necessary to prevent his experiencing that *ennui* which military men, who settle in the country, so often feel when they have nothing particular to engage their attention. He determined, therefore, to invest the principal part of his property in land, and farm it himself, and in order to obtain some insight into his new duties, our future yeoman put himself under the tutelage of his new friends, studied their system, watched them while they worked, until unable any longer to resist the fascination, he fairly doffed his coat, and, seizing a pitchfork, laboured with an energy that defied competition.

"You work well, *mon brave!*" said Madame

Delpoin, who was passing with Lady Susan, on their way to visit a sick patient. "You shame them all."'

"New brooms sweep clean," observed Lady Susan, smiling.

"Impudence!" retorted Fitzgerald, brandishing his pitchfork, "attend to your Lady Bountifulism, and leave farming to me."

"About which you must be quite an expert!" cried Lady Susan, with a laugh.

"You should punish her for this," said Madame Delpoin.

Fitzgerald did; we disclose not how.

The only thing that disturbed Lady Susan Trelawney was the quarrel with her aunt, to whom, with Fitzgerald's concurrence, she wrote, expressing her wish for a reconciliation before she left Switzerland, which she purposed doing immediately after her marriage.

The only answer her niece received to this was a blank cover containing her own letter.

"Let us think of her no more," said Fitzgerald, "let us leave her to the workings of

Lady Susan, sighing.

"For all our sakes," rejoined Fitzgerald. "Family feuds must always prove injurious, and the sooner they are ended, the better."

Here Jackson, who had brought letters for his master, informed Lady Susan that her aunt's maid was very anxious to speak with her.

"Show her in, Jackson," cried Lady Susan, eagerly.

"She's here, my lady," replied the former, going out as Lady Bendish's maid entered.

"You'll find me in the library, my dear," said Fitzgerald, leaving them together.

"Now, what is it?" enquired Lady Susan of the maid. "Do you bring me any message from my aunt?"

"I am not living with your aunt now, my lady," replied she, curtseying, "I've left."

"Left!"

"Yes, my lady; and all the other servants are going. Your ladyship will excuse my mentioning it, but your aunt kept worrying us all so after you left, that flesh and blood couldn't stand it. I'm very sorry—very sorry, indeed, to be obliged to leave her ladyship; but English servants aren't blacks you know, ma'am, and we can't put up with what they can."

"Very true," said Lady Susan, with a sigh.

"I'm sure I should have quitted over and over again, if it hadn't been for you, my lady, and so would all of us. It was entirely on your ladyship's account I stayed as long as I did. But when it comes to ringing one up in the middle of the night to tell one one's not wanted, and just as one falls asleep doing it again for nothing at all, it's time for a respectable servant to go. White people, with English blood in their veins, ain't to be tortured in that way. Your ladyship will excuse my saying so."

I can stand as much as most servants. I'd cut my tongue out rather than answer a lady or say anything disrespectful, as your ladyship well knows I never did. Nor would I have breathed a syllable of the matter now, no, not even to your ladyship, only your aunt refuses to give me a character, and says she'll ruin me if she can; and that's what I'm partly come about, my lady."

"Don't let that trouble you," said Lady Susan. "Refer to me."

"Ah! that's just like your ladyship," interrupted the former, "always ready to do good, and do it at once. I knew you'd stand my friend in this pinch. But bless you, my lady," continued she earnestly, "can't you take me into your service at once. You'll want servants of your own now, and I shouldn't wish for any greater piece of good fortune."

"I should like it," said Lady Susan, "but the question is, whether I can afford to keep a servant of your pretensions."

"Don't let that stand in the way," urged the maid, still more earnestly; "wages shan't part us, and I'll put my hand to anything and everything! I'll work my fingers to the bone, and live on a crust, if your ladyship will but let me serve you and the Major. Jackson says his master is the best and kindest gentleman in the whole world, and delights, as your ladyship does, in making everybody happy about him, and I'm sure he looks as if he did. Shall I fetch my boxes, my lady?"

"I suppose so," said Lady Susan, smiling. "There's no resisting such diplomacy. But, stay, don't go yet. I want to talk to you about my aunt."

"Yes, my lady."

"I'm very unhappy about her," resumed Lady Susan, thoughtfully, "very unhappy

Oh! pray don't be uneasy on that score, my lady," exclaimed the waiting woman eagerly. "The very day I departed a letter arrived from her husband, saying he was in London and would be over here in a day or two."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Oh! quite, my lady, quite sure. There can be no mistake about that, for she told us her husband would punish us all for leaving her. But I'll fetch my boxes, my lady."

Lady Susan, considerably relieved, went to report progress to Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald was not a little pleased to hear that Sir Frederick was expected.

"His coming," he said, "would relieve them of a responsibility that might have caused them both anxiety and trouble. The

engagement of the waiting woman was the very thing they required."

"I'll read you my letters," he continued. The first, from Sugden, ran thus:—

"I received the enclosed from Wilson, which I forward to Lausanne, never doubting that my last letter has sent you thither. We await your next impatiently, and with some little anxiety. Our warmest wishes to you both! Yesterday we christened your godson, who kicked and roared lustily during the ceremony. Of course there never was such a baby! This morning Maud took him to Wilson, who expressed immense delight with her new 'Master Herbert.' All the world here is talking of the Overdone affair, Charley Coventry, the *roué par excellence*, or, in other words, the worst among the very bad who gangrene society, has eloped with Overdone's daughter at last. It turns out, however, that he has caught a Tartar, and taken all this trouble to saddle himself with a shrew, who

his remonstrances and precautions, refuses to see her; and Coventry's creditors have sent him to 'The Rules,' where he gets drunk daily, and beats his unfortunate wife, who, in return, scolds and scratches him. But this is not the only scandal of the season. Brummel has bolted to Calais. The law is pleasant enough to follow, but not so agreeable when it follows us, and this was Brummel's case. He is safe, however, from his creditors, and England is all the better for his absence. His reflections cannot be of the most consolatory nature—if he ever does reflect, which is doubtful."

. . . . . .

"I am very sorry for Lord Overdone," said Lady Susan. "He is really a good sort of man, and will feel this blow severely."

"Yes, and I am grieved for him. But, for that fribble Brummel, he's beneath even con-

tempt. He deserves no pity. He has wilfully thrown away his advantages, and must abide the consequences."

"This other letter will amuse you."

"Who is it from?"

"Lieutenant Antrobus, a young officer, now quartered at Quebec, whom I had the good fortune to get out of a gambling scrape. Listen!"

"My dear Major,

"I ought to be hanged, drawn, and quartered; in fact, cut into minced-meat, for not answering your last letter sooner. I've made up my mind to do it every day for the last six months, and I will *now*, by Jove, I will. The truth is, I'm a bad hand at writing 'at all—at all,' as Irishmen say on the stage, but nowhere else. Somehow a pen doesn't come so natural to my hand as a sword, or a pistol, or a shillalah; and that's the reason why I don't get the adjutancy, on account of the quill-driving, which bothers me entirely.

the billiard table, or losing a few pounds at hazard, or maybe a pony or so in backing a man or a horse, can't hurt any one, you know, Major, dear; and that's all I do, at the present, in the gambling way. Well, I don't suppose I lost seventy pounds the whole of last year. Pretty well, that, you'll say.

"Quebec's not a bad place; but I prefer Montreal. The Montrealers are more rollicking. They give better spreads. The girls too, are more pleasant, and don't turn up their Right Honourable noses at us subs, as the lasses do at Quebec here, where no one gets a look from 'em, under a captain, which I'll not be these six years, though the money's lodged.

"The houses here are roofed with tin. I can't say as much for our pockets. The Yankees come down upon us like swarms of

locusts. They're a mighty off-hand set, and make no bones in asking any officer they meet to show them over the citadel, which I sometimes do, if the girls are very pretty. Not long ago after escorting a party, one of the Yankees says to me, 'Cap'n, I guess we 'Mericans ought to be very much obliged to you Englishers, for keeping everything spick and span, as you do.'

"'Why so?'"

"'Because,' drawled he, 'we must get Quebec sooner or later, I calculate.'

"'Sir,' says I, 'I'm going to take a liberty with you. I'm going to pull your nose.'

"'Well,' drawled he again, feeling it, 'I don't calculate it wants pulling. It's quite long enough.'

"'Nevertheless,' says I, 'I shall pull it,' and I did so; he called me out, for though the Yankees bully and brag, they're mighty plucky, I will say that for them. Well, I hit him on the ear and he shot off my right whisker, and then we shook hands, and became

"From the soles of my feet

"To the top of my scalp,

"ANTROBUS.

"P.S.—If I can serve you in any way or at any time, write, and I'll be over in the first ship."

As the marriage was to take place on the following morning, it became necessary for Fitzgerald to see the English minister on the subject. He accordingly set out for the purpose, but fortunately met that gentleman, at a short distance from his house. While they were conversing, a gentleman somewhat advanced in years, but cast in nature's noblest mould, came up, and after giving the minister "Good morning," in a courteous, measured tone, passed on.

"Surely I've seen that face before," observed Fitzgerald, looking after him.

"Often, I dare say," said the minister, smiling. "That's Coriolanus!"

"Coriolanus!"

"Yes, John Kemble!"

"Ah! I recollect him perfectly now," said Fitzgerald, "but what a ruin he is?"

"A very fine ruin, you must admit," said the minister. "What office do you think Mr. Kemble discharges now? He's my clerk."

"Your clerk!" exclaimed Fitzgerald, in astonishment.

"Yes, my clerk," echoed the minister smiling, "though of a different persuasion. Mr. Kemble, since his residence at Lausanne, has regularly attended my chapel, and observing I'd no clerk, he voluntarily took upon himself that office. If you were not leaving, I'd present you. Mr. Kemble receives every Wednesday, and I can assure you his *réunions*, are the best we have in Lausanne."*

* A fact.

CHAPTER XI.

LADY SUSAN FITZGERALD, TO MRS. SUGDEN,

"Yverdon.

"My Dear Mrs. Sugden,

"At length, the uncertainty and perpetual discomfort in which my life, for the last few years, has been involved, are happily ended, and my future position is, at least, defined and ascertained.

"Yes, my dear friend, yesterday I became the wife of the man, whom, of all others, I firmly believe best calculated to insure my happiness. The ceremony was performed by the English Chaplain, in the English Chapel

at Lausanne, and my grateful heart swelled almost to bursting, when the voice of the minister and the congratulations of the few dear friends present assured me that no man could sunder us.

" After the ceremony, we returned to Mr. Delpoin's house, where we found the whole establishment in their best attire, drawn up in the court-yard, under the direction of Jackson; the men to give us three hearty cheers, while the lasses strewed our pathway with flowers. There was so much heart in these demonstrations that both my dear husband and myself were sensibly affected. The parting from our good friends, the Delpoins, proved a severe trial. We had met with so much kindness from them, and had enjoyed such uninterrupted happiness in their society, that it was not without the greatest regret we left their hospitable roof.

" We purpose going down the Rhine to Cologne, and thence to Brussels, in the neighbourhood of which city we intend remaining

usual kindness he has given us a letter of introduction to a friend of his, a gentleman who farms his own estate, which is very extensive. Cannot you, my dear Mrs. Sugden, and your husband, and Master Herbert, meet us at Brussels. I need not say what joy this arrangement would give both Fitzgerald and myself.

"My husband, who has just returned from a stroll among the vineyards, desires his best love to you all, in which I most cordially join, and believe me to remain, my dearest friend,

"Yours affectionately,

"SUSAN FITZGERALD.

"P.S.—Direct, *Poste Restante*, Brussels."

The following morning our travellers left Yverdon. It was late in the autumn, the day

splendid, everything seemed *couleur de rose*, and it was not without difficulty that the happy pair tore themselves from a scene so exquisitely lovely. A good breakfast at the hotel, compensated, in some degree, for this necessity.

At the expiration of a fortnight, they reached Brussels in the evening. Here, to their extreme disappointment, they found only a letter from Sugden, who, after expressing the extreme satisfaction Lady Susan's letter afforded him, thus proceeded—

"We fully intended meeting you at Brussels, but, alas! *L'homme propose et Dieu dispose*; Maud has just been summoned down to the country again, from which we have but recently returned, and I am unexpectedly tied by the leg here in London. So much for plethora of practice!

"But, after all, my being detained here will enable me to serve you. Your agent has absconded, so I have thought it advisable to

As Fitzgerald had left no money in his agent's hands, he was not in the least disquieted by this latter's absconding. He executed the power of attorney, therefore, and posting the letter, thought no more of the matter.

Next morning, our travellers set out for Foret, to present the letter of introduction with which Monsieur Delpoin had furnished them. A ride of two miles, principally through forest, brought them to Monsieur Veuve's mansion. An extensive pile of building, with stables, out-houses, a mill, barn, &c. Monsieur Veuve received his visitors with great cordiality, and insisted on their taking up their abode at a pavilion opposite, which, he assured them, was wholly unoccupied, and quite at their service.

Fitzgerald accordingly returned to the

hotel to bring back the servants, &c., and while these were getting ready he strolled into the park. He had hardly gone ten yards when he saw, to his astonishment, Lord Alwaysailing, or, to speak more correctly, the Duke of Ilford!

"Delighted to see you, my dear Fitzgerald!" exclaimed his Grace, springing forward and seizing his hand, "Why, we haven't met since—but we won't revive *dolores*. 'All's well that ends well,' and I never saw you looking better, but I thought you were at Spa. What brings you to Brussels?"

Fitzgerald saw the Duke was ignorant of his marriage, and resolved to keep him so. He simply answered, therefore, that he was at Brussels, on his way to England, and enquired what had brought his Grace there?

"You may as well ask that blade of grass?" replied the Duke, slashing his cane through some growing near. "We single fellows are the sport of every wind, wafted hither and thither, just as Master Boreas pleases, at

"Not a rap!" rejoined the Duke carelessly, "I never mind trifles now; I'm cured of that?"

"What has cured you?" asked Fitzgerald, somewhat amazed.

"What!" echoed his Grace, giving the grass another twitch with his cane. "Why, marriage to be sure! Marriage has cured me."

"Marriage!"

"Yes, that greatest of all costly evils. Only marry, Fitzgerald, and you'll never care which way the wind blows. I'd always a horror of matrimony."

"Why did you marry?"

"Why! Because I was a fool—because I was tricked into it—because I couldn't help it," rejoined the Duke indignantly. "Ah! well may Tom Moore say we don't know

what that 'wily sex' can do. Sit down, and I'll tell you how it all happened," continued his Grace, throwing himself on a bench. "You must know that the fatigue and worry consequent to my succeeding to the Dukedom, laid me up with a fever at Hounslow, and when I came to my senses, I saw, to my extreme astonishment, the Countess Trelawney seated by my bedside. 'Hush!' she whispered, 'Don't speak. Thank God you are recovering! Drink this!' and giving me some medicine and enjoining me to keep quiet, left the room. In the evening she returned. 'I'm going home,' said she. 'I can safely leave you now. Adieu! my dear lord. I'll see you in the morning.' Then squeezing my hand and looking at me tenderly, she departed.

"How came Lady Trelawney here?" I enquired of the housekeeper. 'Her ladyship happened to call, my lord, just as you became delirious, and from that blessed hour she has never left the house until now. Oh! she's an angel on earth!'

entered at the moment, chorussed the same notes."

"Of course her ladyship returned?" said Fitzgerald.

"That you might take your oath to," continued the Duke, "and the physician and his subordinates continued the same chorus till I became disgusted, and not a little alarmed, at hearing Lady Trelawney's praises eternally sounded in my ears. In this fix I resolved to steal off to the Isle of Wight."

"Wisely resolved," said Fitzgerald.

"But not so easily put in practice," rejoined the Duke. "Her ladyship was too sharp for me. She took to her bed, and just as I was getting into my carriage, the physician came over to say that she was dying, and wished to take leave of me; so, of course, I was obliged to go."

"Well!"

"Well, I found her supported by pillows, with a host of physic bottles and pill-boxes on the table near her. She took my hand, and looking piteously in my face, informed me, in a faint voice, that, with the exception of a small annuity to Lady Susan, she had left me all her fortune. I was going to remonstrate against this, when she fell back on the pillows, and I was forced to leave the room.".

"What happened then?"

"Why the physician joined me. 'Can nothing save her?' said I.

"'Yes, you can,' said he.

"I stared, and demanded his meaning.

"'It would be unpardonable to stand on etiquette in such an extreme case,' continued he; 'I, therefore, tell your Grace plainly, that my patient is falling a victim to her attachment for you.'

"'Are you serious?' I asked.

"'God forbid that I should jest in such a

will lie at your door!"

"Of course there was no getting out of that?" said Fitzgerald.

"Oh! no. In a word, Lady Trelawney gained the coronet she had angled for, and *my* real miseries commenced. You've seen 'Jerry Sneak' on the stage? Alas! he lived in clover compared with me. You can easily conceive the thousand ways in which a woman, if she chooses, can annoy her husband; and, trust me, the Duchess did not spare me, my dear Fitzgerald, for the reluctance I had shown to share my new dignity with her. After leading me the most miserable life you can possibly conceive, for more than six months, she died, leaving the bulk of her property to the Foresters, who, since her marriage into the family, had courted her by the vilest

toadyism. But, I must go, I've promised to accompany a friend to Lacken. *Bon voyage*, my dear Fitzgerald!"

And off he tripped, singing—

"Oh! happy the day, when free from strife,
I found myself without a wife,
'Twas the happiest day in all my life!"

CHAPTER XII.

FITZGERALD said nothing to Lady Susan of his meeting with the Duke, because he knew such communication could only awaken reminiscences that would give her pain. The following day they devoted to Waterloo; the next to a minute inspection of Monsieur Veuve's farm and establishment, Lady Susan entering warmly into her husband's views and ideas. She was, as we have seen, an incomparable manager, and as they had everything to make them comfortable, they enjoyed their honeymoon to the full.

Monsieur Veuve, too, was a gentleman—a man of talent—and possessed precisely that

sort of information in which Fitzgerald was interested; while he, on his part, fought all his battles over again for the edification of Monsieur Veuve.

One evening, as was his wont, Fitzgerald sat jotting down in his note-book the information he had gained during the day. Lady Susan, who was employed near the window, threw down her crochet, and, going to her husband, put her arm round his neck. He looked fondly up. Kissing his forehead, she buried her slender fingers in his luxuriant dark hair, and said—

"Come, give up, dearest; you've been writing long enough. Shall I play to you?"

"Yes, presently; when I've finished this note, which is important. Oh! what the deuce are you doing there?"

"Only pulling out a grey hair, my love—the first I've seen. I hope it's not a bad omen!"

"Pshaw! don't be a goose! How can a

"I don't like finding the first grey hair, you know; we always associate grey hairs with grief—regard them as the natural accompaniment to trial and to trouble."

"What nonsense you talk, Susan; grey hairs no more bring trial and trouble than a snowstorm brings an earthquake!"

"I know that, Mr. Logician," said Lady Susan, pulling her husband's ear.

"I must punish you if you take such unwarrantable liberties!" cried Fitzgerald, laughing.

"Punish me, if you please," resumed his wife, in a graver tone; "but I wish I hadn't found that grey hair, for all that."

"You do, eh!" said Fitzgerald, wiping his pen. "Give me your reason."

"I know you'll laugh at me," replied Lady Susan, hesitating, "but—"

"But what, dearest?" said Fitzgerald, taking her hand, and pressing it.

"I can't help thinking we're too happy, dearest Herbert."

"Too happy, my love!"

"Yes, too happy. I cannot help thinking somehow it won't last. Perhaps, I'm too apprehensive, and you are right in laughing at me. But I've been so accustomed to disquiet and discomfort," continued she, still more seriously, "that this unusual state of things seems unnatural. I feel as if I were in a delightful dream, from which I dread awaking into some horrible reality."

"A flourish of trumpets!" cried Fitzgerald, starting up. "Away with the blue devils, and welcome Mozart! Ah! Monsieur Veuve, you are just in time to hear your favourite overture of Mozart, Don Giovanni."

"I regret I cannot avail myself of Madame's delightful finger," replied Monsieur Veuve, bowing to Lady Susan, "but my *homme d'affaires*—what you call bailiff in

of the post office, so I did myself the pleasure of bringing it."

"Thank you very much," said Fitzgerald, twisting the letter about. "I hope you will favour us again with your company as soon as you have finished with your bailiff. My wife, you must know, is a very superstitious lady, and I want you to help me to rally her."

"I will do my best," said Monsieur Veuve. "But what makes Madame superstitious? Has she seen a mouse or a spider?"

"Neither," replied Fitzgerald, laughing. "Her fears have not even that foundation, yet she sees, with her lynx eyes, all that's to happen to we poor sightless mortals!"

"You detain Monsieur Veuve, my dear," interrupted Lady Susan, who was anxious to get the letter.

"*Pardi!* That's true," cried Monsieur Veuve, starting up. "The sooner I go, the

sooner I shall hear Mozart. *Au revoir, mes amis.*"

"Well, who is it from?" enquired her ladyship, eagerly, the moment their friend had left the room.

"Sugden," replied her husband, opening the letter. "I wonder what makes him write again so soon?"

"Read it, and then you'll know," said his wife, still more eagerly. "Laugh at me if you like, my love; but I can't help thinking that letter contains bad news."

"And I'll wager a kiss," said her husband, looking at her affectionately, "that it contains good news! Perhaps Sugden and his wife are coming, after all."

"Perhaps," replied Lady Susan, in a tone that contradicted her words, "but read it—read it," she added, impatiently. "I've a presentiment."

"I must chide you, if you give way to these weaknesses, dearest," said Fitzgerald, complying.

with a forced smile, "Come, you must admit, after all, that I am a true lynx, as you called me. Permit me to read the letter."

"I had better," said her husband, giving her the paper, "or you will imagine matters worse than they really are. I quite agree with Sugden. This power of attorney must be a forgery."

The letter was as follows:—

"My dear Fitzgerald,

"I received the power of attorney safe. I left it at the Bank, and went there two days after, to draw your dividends, when, to my amazement, I was informed there were no such stocks standing in your name. I lost no time in applying to the proper authorities, and ascertained that the whole of your three-and-a-half per cents., with the ex-

ception of two thousand pounds, had been sold out by your late agent, only three days after you left England. I was shown the power of attorney by which the scoundrel did this, which must be a forgery, as I am sure you never intended to sell out. But if the deed be a forgery, it is a very clever one; for if I were asked on oath whether I believed the signature yours, I should answer in the affirmative. Your immediate presence here is imperative—therefore lose no time in coming to England. Maud, who has returned, will have everything ready for your reception; for, I need scarcely say, we shall expect you to take up your quarters in Russell Square.

"Yours, &c.,

"E. SUGDEN.

"P.S.—Of course, if the power be a forgery, the Bank is liable."

"Well, my dear," said Lady Susan, return-

"There's a heroine!" cried her husband, trying to inspire a confidence he by no means felt. "That's the way to look at it. I see you view things in a proper light, my dear Susan, and justify the high opinion I always had of you. Though you must confess," added he, smiling, and drawing her on his knee, "that you did betray a little weakness just now."

"Fitzgerald," said his wife, firmly, "you shall never find me weak when I ought to be strong. Since I have you, let Fortune do her worst. Whatever our future lot may be, I will endeavour to bear it patiently, and conform to circumstances. Any deprivation, so long as I am not parted from you."

"Which you shall never be," cried her husband, fervently. "We will strengthen

and support each other, as God intended man and wife should. Now, my dear, I'll go and pack up."

Early next morning Fitzgerald and Lady Susan started for Ostend.

"You came like a meteor, Madam," said Monsieur Veuve, as he handed Lady Susan into the carriage. "You illumine my darkness for a brief space, and then leave me in greater gloom than before."

"You are not more sorry to lose us," said Fitzgerald, pressing his hand, "than we are to part from you. Go where we may, we shall never forget the happy days we have spent here, and trust, that when we get settled in England, you will give us an opportunity of returning your kind hospitality."

With minds more at ease, our travellers would have been delighted to have visited both Ghent and Bruges, but the uncertainty of things in England deprived them of all inclination or capacity for enjoyment. Arriving at Ostend, they had the good fortune to

short sojourn at Dover as possible, and reached Russell Square late in the evening, where they met with a most affectionate welcome, which proved a cordial to their hearts, depressed as they were by doubt and apprehension.

They had scarcely entered the drawing-room, when Mrs. Sugden, taking her baby from the nurse, held it up to Fitzgerald.

"There, sir! there's your godson," cried the proud mother. "Say; is he not a fine little fellow, Major."

"A fine child indeed!" said Fitzgerald, taking the little fellow in his hands, and holding him up. "I don't think I ever saw a finer. God bless you, my little man!" added he, kissing the babe. "We shall be great allies, I suspect."

The infant crowed and kicked, and stretch-

ing out its little hand, clutched Fitzgerald by the nose, causing, not only the child to be delighted, but the whole of the party to laugh heartily.

"Upon my word, sir," cried Sugden, "you are a bold fellow to take by the nose the hero of a hundred fights. Is that how you greet your godfather, you impudent rogue?"

"Let me have him," asked Lady Susan, "I long to press the dear little fellow to my bosom."

Fitzgerald put the child into her arms, saying, "Love him, my dear Susan, for his godfather's sake."

"For his own sake—for all our sakes," murmured his wife, hugging little Herbert, who gave the only token of his pleasure and that vanity inherent in our natures by showing his toes.

"Yes; they're very pretty," said Sugden, "and now we've all admired them, suppose, Maud, you show Lady Susan her room, while I order up the creature comforts, and see that

selves, the gentlemen adjourned to the library.

"Sugden!" cried Fitzgerald, "the more I think of it the more convinced I am that the power of attorney, by means of which my agent sold out my stocks, is a forgery."

"Well, I think it must be," replied the lawyer, "or you've blundered egregiously, after the caution I gave you. You remember I explained fully to you that there were two kinds of power of attorney. One authorising the drawing of dividends, the other giving absolute power over the entire stocks; and I warned you to be very careful in reading over the power which you gave your agent before you signed it."

"So I was," rejoined Fitzgerald. "So I was; and I'll take my oath the power I signed enabled the scoundrel to draw the dividends only."

"I am glad to hear you speak so confidently on that point," pursued his friend; "we'll go to the Bank the first thing in the morning, and if you pronounce the deed to be a forgery, as we've every reason to believe it is, our next step will be to prove it."

"How can we do that?"

"Can't exactly say at present," rejoined the lawyer. "We must put the matter into the hands of my man of business, and leave him to hunt up the evidence."

"Won't that be difficult?"

"It may, or it may not," said Sugden, with a shrug of his shoulders. "It may or it may not; we must take our chance. But one thing is certain, we must be in a condition to prove the forgery, or, of course, the Bank won't replace the stock. But it's useless discussing the matter now," continued Sugden, rising; "we can do nothing until we've been to the Bank; so suppose we rejoin the ladies."

"With all my heart," replied Fitzgerald. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof;

the world wag as it will, there's one thing we are especially lucky in, my dear fellow."

"What's that?"

"Our wives!"

Next morning the two friends hurried to the Bank. After some demur, Fitzgerald was allowed to examine the deed. He looked at it long and attentively, and returned it to the clerk with a sigh.

"You are sure you have examined it sufficiently," asked Sugden.

"I am," replied Fitzgerald, and taking his friend's arm they left the office together.

They walked along the Poultry for some time in silence, until Sugden, unable to restrain his impatience any longer, said—

"Well, what is your opinion? What do you decide? Is the power a forgery?"

"It is, and it is not," replied Fitzgerald,

very much agitated. "It's a forgery for me, but not a forgery for the Bank."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," replied Fitzgerald, "that though I am quite sure the document I read over at the Bank is not the same which I read over so attentively at my agent's office, it is nevertheless the paper I signed."

"The paper you signed!" cried the lawyer, in amazement.

"Yes! That the signature is mine, I cannot for a moment doubt."

Sugden's countenance fell.

"Can you account for this discrepancy?" said the lawyer, at length.

"I think I can," replied his companion. "I recall now, that, after I had read the paper, and was on the point of signing it, my agent took me to the window, and asked whether I did not want an advance. I told him 'No,' and thought at the time it was a very unnecessary question, as he had just procured several circular notes for me. But I see

plainly now that this was only a *ruse* to get me away from the table, while the clerk exchanged the deeds."

"The clever scamps!" exclaimed Sugden. "No doubt that was the way they managed it. There can't be the least doubt of it—not the least."

"No, I don't think there can," said Fitzgerald, sighing; "and how my agent, whom I had known and trusted so many years, should— But it's useless talking of that. Hang the fellow!"

"We would, if we could, you may take your oath!" exclaimed Sugden; "and so would many others, if they could catch him, and the law would bear them out. But there's small chance of that, I suspect."

"What are we to do next?" enquired the Major, anxiously.

"I fear we've nothing to expect from the Bank," said the lawyer, with some hesitation.

"Clearly not! The Bank is not at all to

blame. We've neither right nor reason to expect anything from the Bank."

"Let's go down to your agent's," cried Sugden, quickening his pace. "We may, perhaps, be able to get at this clerk, or, at all events, hear something."

"Come along, then," said Fitzgerald. "While there's a chance, we'll not give up the game. Many a battle has been won after it was lost."

CHAPTER XIII.

Lady Susan was sitting in the library alone when Fitzgerald entered.

"I see," said she, throwing her arm round his neck. "I see you bring bad news; but, cheer up, my dear husband," looking up and smiling through her tears, "you haven't lost me, you know."

Fitzgerald pressed her to his bosom, and, kissing her, walked to the window.

"It is for your sake, and for your sake alone, I grieve, Susan," replied he, as soon as he could trust himself to speak. "*I* could rough it—I've been accustomed to do so; but to involve *you* in my ruin, drag you down to poverty, I confess it unmans me."

"Don't let it do so—you shouldn't," urged his wife. "Recollect the misery from which you rescued me—misery to which my present position is paradise! But, tell me, dear Herbert, is all lost?"

"Yes, all—all, Susan, with the exception of the two thousand, which, by some unaccountable accident, my vile agent did not sell out, and which is all now that interposes between us and actual poverty! But, remember, we are much better off than scores whom this unhappy man has utterly beggared—for he has not left a shilling behind him, and no one will get a penny."

"We've reason to be grateful then," cried Lady Susan, eagerly, "great reason. Matters might have been worse, you see, Herbert, much worse; and there's much may be done with two thousand pounds properly invested. Two thousand pounds! Why, it's a little gold mine!" added she, with a smile. "I shall ride in my coach and four yet!"

"Whether you do or not," cried her hus-

a fortune in the way you point out. I'm far more likely to diminish than increase our little capital. No! let it remain where it is. The income arising from it will always keep us from actual poverty."

"Then what do you think of doing?" enquired his wife.

"Apply to the Horse Guards for some employment in which I may be useful. Unfortunately Wellington is at Vienna, or I know he would do something for me. I'm not so sure of my interest at the Horse Guards—my not going out to India being against me."

"Yes, but that was not your fault, you know, my dear."

"True; but the authorities are not bound to consider that."

"At all events," said Lady Susan, earnestly; "let us have a home of our own, however

humble that home may be. Don't let us be a burden on our kind friends here. I could not bear that."

"Strange!" said her husband, smiling, "but do you know, Susan, the very same idea was crossing my mind."

"Then you approve of my suggestion?"

"Certainly. No one of independent spirit, or who values his own self-respect, will be a dead weight upon others. Let us not, however, run into the common fault," continued Fitzgerald; "of refusing to be obliged. Let us avail ourselves of the hospitality of our friends so long as our being here affords them pleasure, and we have had time to settle ourselves. Why shouldn't we? There's nothing like common sense being brought to bear to test these things."

"I quite agree with you, my love," answered his wife. "People are sometimes ready enough to confer obligations, though they refuse to receive them. But the servants—"

leaving the room.

"Send Jackson to me," said Fitzgerald, to the butler, who answered the bell.

"Parting with this faithful fellow," said Fitzgerald, mentally; "is worst of all, but it must be done. Jackson," continued he, speaking aloud as the latter entered the room, "I'm sorry to say there's a necessity for our instantly parting."

"Sir!" cried the astonished Jackson.

"The fact is, my good fellow," resumed his master, in a husky voice; "I've met with a heavy loss—so heavy indeed, as to almost ruin me. My agent—"

"I always thought that fellow was an infernal rogue," interrupted Jackson, furiously. "But as to our parting, because you can't afford to keep me, that's not to be thought of—that's not a thing that can be

done, so it's no use talking about it," and he was leaving the room when his master called him back, saying—

"You must not act upon impulse in this matter, Jackson. It won't do. Let us talk the affair over calmly, and see what's best to be done under the circumstances."

"I'll do that, your honor; only don't ask me to leave you, for I tell you once and for all, that I won't."

"Well," said his master, smiling, "perhaps there will be no necessity, ultimately, for your doing so. Let me see. You've a brother living in Ireland, haven't you!"

"Sure and I have, sir. Tady Jackson. He's got as purty a farm as ye d wish to see, with a nate wife, pigs, childer, cows and barn quite convanient. Tady's quite well to do in the world, and as steady as a judge, yer honor. Plase God I'll see Tady agin one of these fine days."

"You wish to see him, then?"

"I do, sir."

hundred pounds and upwards in hand?"

"About that."

"Very well. Then I can't want ready cash. Now listen to me, and don't be a blockhead."

"I won't if I can help it, sir."

"Go down to your brother's at once, and make him a long visit. I've no doubt by the time you're tired of one another I shall be in a position to send for you. I shall be sure to get something when the Duke comes back."

"That's certain sure, sir; and I'll be off at once. As your honor says, there's nothing like a little common sense in these matters. Och! the Duke—God bless his long nose! will be sure to do for ye. But if he doesn't it's only bringing my lady over to Tady's until something turns up."

"Thank heaven—"

"Oh! Major. I forgot to ask you a favour."

"What's that?'

"Only that you'll be kind enough to take care of my money for me, whilst I'm gone."

"No, no, Jackson, I couldn't take care of my own, you know," said his master, understanding the faithful fellow's motives. "No, you must take care of it yourself."

Jackson again left the room, not at all satisfied that he couldn't succeed in his kind intentions.

"Thank God, that's over," said Fitzgerald, with a sigh, as Jackson left the room. "I shall miss that faithful fellow sadly."

"Well, I've managed capitally," cried Lady Susan, returning. "Mrs. Sugden's maid wants to go down to Devonshire to keep her uncle's house, so my servant is to remain in her place."

"Bravo!" cried Fitzgerald. "So far, so well. But it's time to dress for dinner, which I shall enjoy with a better appetite than I

not bore them with solicitations, but contented themselves by hoping they would stay with them as long as suited their pleasure or convenience. Sugden promised to look out for a good mortgage, which would produce a better interest for the money, which mortgage he effected in a few days.

After breakfast Fitzgergald and Lady Susan, accompanied by Mrs. Sugden and the baby, sallied forth for Portman Square. Poor, dear, old Wilson's eyes sparkled with joy when she saw them.

"Well, to be sure!" cried she, holding up her hands. "How things do come about! To think that you should marry this dear, good lady, yourself, after all, Master Herbert! I was never so delighted in all my life as when I received your letter from Brussels. Ha! ha! ha! No fear of the family becoming extinct now!"

"But your joy at seeing Herbert, the soldier," said Lady Susan, blushing, "must not make you neglect Herbert the baby."

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Sugden, presenting the little fellow.

"Oh! there's no danger of that, ma'am," replied Wilson, kissing the child. "I should love him for his godfather's sake, if I didn't for his own, which I'm sure nobody could help doing."

"Don't you find it dull here," asked Lady Susan, looking round the spacious old dining room, which was nearly denuded of furniture.

"I do, indeed, my lady," answered the kind old woman, sighing, "and no wonder, seeing what I see, and what I have seen. I can hardly bear to live in the old house, and, yet, I couldn't bear to leave it. It would be the death of me, I do believe; though I'm as solitary as it is possible for any one to be."

"I suppose you seldom hear from my brother?" said Fitzgerald, who had been contemplating his father's portrait, which, covered

the old lady; I always get my orders through Billing, and apply to him for anything I want. But the house is in sad condition. The rain comes in everywhere. The splendid ceiling in the new drawing-room, which cost nobody knows how much, will be quite spoiled if the roof is not repaired, and I can't get Sir Alfred to do any mortal thing, though he's rolling in money. Billing says he grudges every farthing, even to buy himself necessaries."

"What a change," said Fitzgerald.

"Not an uncommon one," observed Mrs. Sugden.

"By no means," said Lady Susan. "How constantly we see people rushing from one extreme to the other."

"But you should have seen the baronet, when the execution was put in the house, ladies," pursued Wilson, almost in a whisper,

"I really thought he would have gone mad. Indeed, I very much question if he has ever been quite right in his mind since. None of his grand friends would help him, and he would certainly have killed Mr. Brummel, if some one hadn't prevented him, for making a joke about it. Everything was sold, except the heir-looms, which the creditors couldn't touch, and Sir Alfred knelt on the bare boards in this very room, Mrs. Sugden, and swore he'd be revenged yet. It was quite awful to see him!"

"Awful indeed!" cried both ladies, shuddering.

"I see," said Mrs Sugden, "that Portman Square is not free from romance."

"Doubtless!" responded Lady Susan. "Human frailties and human passions exercise their sway everywhere; and there is not an old family mansion that could not tell its own tragic tale."

"If the walls had voices as well as ears," said Mrs. Sugden, laughing.

threshold. Not would I have done so, but for you, dear Wilson—and, yet," continued he, looking around him, and sighing, "we've been very happy here together."

"Ay, and shall be again, Master Herbert!" exclaimed the old lady, striking the floor with her stick; "in spite of all that's gone and been done, something tells me that the chimneys in this old house will smoke again yet, and the Fitzgeralds flourish gayer than ever."

"God grant it may be so!" said Lady Susan, fervently.

"Amen! with all my heart," pursued Mrs. Sugden.

"Come!" cried Fitzgerald, impatiently.

"Don't stay away long, Master Herbert. Don't let it be long before I see you again," urged Wilson.

"I won't," said Fitzgerald; "but I wish I could see you anywhere else than here."

And hurrying the nurse and the ladies into the carriage, he ordered the coachman to drive to the Horse Guards.

In Piccadilly they passed Booth, looking very shabby and rueful.

"Poor fellow!" thought Fitzgerald, "I would relieve him; but I'm as poor as he is, and want assistance myself."

At the Horse Guards, Fitzgerald put his name down for the next *levée*, and the party returned to Russell Square.

Fitzgerald then proceeded to draw up a brief statement of his case, which occupied him till it was time to dress for dinner. On going into the drawing-room, he found Sugden engaged in conversation with a gentleman whose face he thought he knew.

"Mr. Billing," said Sugden, presenting him.

"I haven't seen you since you were a boy, Major Fitzgerald," said Mr. Billing, shaking him cordially by the hand, "and I am delighted at this opportunity of renewing our acquaintance."

nem. You can't imagine how popular you re."

"Heaven bless them!" exclaimed Fitzgerald, "my heart has always been with them, and always will."

"And if they could see your lady," continued Billing, "they would worship her. You must permit me to congratulate you there, Major. You may challenge all England to produce her equal!"

"Yes, she's the best wife in the world—except my own," said Sugden, laughing. "Help yourself, and pass the bottle. Don't you think it was very strange, Billing, that the Major's mother should not have relented on her death-bed—have died, and not bequeathed him a shilling?"

"If you had known her ladyship as well as I did, Mr. Sugden, you would not have thought it strange in the least. A woman of so determined a spirit I never before met. I shall never forget, when I was making her will, the look she gave me, Major, when I

allowance must be made for this frenzy—for I can call it nothing else."

"Surely — surely," said Sugden, "we could not, in reason, expect that he would be very much gratified at such an event."

"Most unquestionably," rejoined Fitzgerald. "I see now a reconciliation is quite out of the question."

"No doubt, for the present," said Billing, "I should be afraid to hint such a thing to him."

"I have been very unfortunate in my family ties," pursued Fitzgerald, in a desponding tone.

"I've always thought you so," rejoined Billing, "peculiarly so; and I can assure you I'm far from being the only one entertaining that opinion. Scores among the tenants think as I do. They cherish your memory among

unhappy terms I am on with my brother, Mr. Billing?"

"I know no one," replied Mr. Billing, nodding, "who is on much better terms with him, not even myself. He appears to have become soured with the world, and hates every human being he comes in contact with."

"Does he ever mention my name, or allude to me in any way?"

"I never heard him do so until a few days ago," replied Mr. Billing, with some slight hesitation.

"On what occasion was that?"

"When I acquainted him with your marriage, which I heard of through Mr. Sugden's man of business."

"What did he say, then?"

Billing was silent.

"Have you any objection to repeat what my brother said?"

"I have," replied Mr. Billing, "a very great objection. It would give us great pain—you to hear and me to relate, and serve no

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of me at such a time," said Fitzgerald, "and I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

"I suppose the estates are clear by this time?" observed Sugden.

"Yes! and many thousands in hand," rejoined Billing. "My business in coming to town is to invest. I don't suppose Sir Alfred has spent a hundred pounds a year."

"Mrs. Wilson tells me he's a perfect miser," said Fitzgerald.

"She's quite right," replied Billing. "It is really quite painful to see him. The house he lives in is scarcely habitable, and as for the old woman who resides with him—and he keeps no other servant—she is the most savage, uncouth, disgusting wretch you can possibly imagine. I never go to the house unless compelled to do so by business, and Sir Alfred sees no one else."

"Who takes care of Copton Hall?"

"No one but Bonsor. There's not another soul there except the under-gardener. The place would go to rack and ruin if I didn't contrive to expend an odd hundred or so now and then in repairs."

"What a pity!" said Fitzgerald; "such a fine old place as it is, and such pride, as I am told, my dear father always took in it."

"It *is* a pity," pursued Billing, "but there is no help for it."

"What's become of Mrs. Dobree?" enquired Fitzgerald, carelessly.

"*Dobree?*"

"Yes; Singleton, that was."

"Ah! I know who you mean, now."

"Do you know where she is?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"But 'for the satisfaction of my thought,' as Iago says."

"Fill your glass Mr. Billing," said Sugden.

"Then we'll join the ladies."

CHAPTER XIV.

"Good morning," said Mrs. Sugden, entering the breakfast-room later than usual.

"Good morning!" cried her husband. "I was just going to write your epitaph, Maud."

"I couldn't come before, my love. Master Herbert, you must know, is cutting his teeth."

"Which makes him a little fractious, I suppose," said Fitzgerald.

"And the nurse, too, unfortunately," rejoined Mrs. Sugden, "for she gets no sleep, so—"

"Tea or coffee?" asked Lady Susan.

"Coffee, please. Thanks for being my *locum tenens*," answered Mrs. Sugden.

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"I couldn't come before, my love. Master Herbert, you must know, is cutting his teeth."

"Which makes him a little fractious, I suppose," said Fitzgerald.

"And the nurse, too, unfortunately," joined Mrs. Sugden, "for she gets in terrors so—"

"Tea or coffee?" asked Lee.

"Coffee, please. This is a *locum tenens*," answered Mrs. Sugden.

seen the other day when we called, but the porter told me General T—— would be sure to be there this morning. I suppose you don't want me for anything, Susan."

"No, my love. I am going with Mrs. Sugden to Fulham."

"Who are you going to see there, Maud?" enquired Sugden.

"The Maitlands. I thought of asking them to dinner on Thursday."

"Do. I should like you to meet them, Lady Susan. You will be sure to be pleased with them. They'll just suit you. Now, Herbert; I'm off."

"I'm quite ready."

"I see," said Sugden as they hurried down Chancery Lane—every one hurries down that street—"I see, Billing knows nothing whatever of Singleton that was. If your

brother allows her anything, it must be through some other channel."

"Clearly," observed Fitzgerald. "Clearly. Billing would never lend his hand to any dirty work. He's too honourable. I like what I've seen of him."

"And he's as favourably impressed with you. He was greatly shocked when I informed him of your losses, and hoped if you are in want of cash at any time, you'll draw upon him."

"That's noble!" cried Fitzgerald, with tears in his eyes. "If ever I have it in my power, Billing shall be no loser by this act of kindness."

"I am almost certain, however," said Sugden, "there has been some underhand work, and I will ferret it out yet. Good-bye!"

"Who's that?" enquired Fitzgerald.

"Lord Overdone, one of the richest and most miserable men in London."

"And Booth's late master," said Fitzgerald. "I recollect, you wrote me all about him. His

gerald sent up his card, and was immediately admitted.

"Glad to see you, Major Fitzgerald," said the General, putting down his pen. "Now, what is it?"

"Are you busy?"

"Rather so—but I can attend to you."

"Here's my memorial then."

The General threw it into the basket.

"Tell me what you want at once!"

"To be reinstated, if possible—at all events, employed. My agent has nearly ruined me."

"That's bad," said the Secretary; "and what's worse, I fear we can't assist you."

"Surely my services—"

The Secretary smiled.

"You know, as well as I do, what they go for," said he. "The fact is, my dear Fitzgerald, your brother's votes have been dead

against the Government these last two years, and your having sold out increases the difficulty. I'd better tell you this honestly," continued he, "than let you lose your time in dangling here for nothing."

"Surely," said Fitzgerald, biting his lip; "and I thank you for being so candid. Still, his Royal Highness——"

"Can do nothing for you," interrupted the General, resuming his pen. "His hands are tied. Besides, he's at the Duke of Rutland's. You had better try Wellington."

"Wellington's at Vienna."

"True; but a letter will reach him. Whatever *he* asks, we must do. Good morning."

"Good morning," said Fitzgerald, rising.

"If you fail with the Duke," cried the General, calling after him, "which I don't think likely, let me see you again, will you?"

"Thank you!" said Fitzgerald, with a heart much lightened. "Between two stools I shall not come to the ground," thought he.

tipping him.

"Mr. B——, sir, if he'll do."

"The very man."

The porter beckoned to a footman who was lounging at the hall door.

"This gentleman wishes to see Mr. B——."

"What name, sir?"

"Tell Mr. B—— I'll not detain him a minute," replied Fitzgerald, giving the footman his card.

The man vanished, and almost immediately returning, ushered Fitzgerald into a room where Mr. B—— was writing.

"This is indeed a pleasure!" exclaimed Mr. B——, seizing Fitzgerald by both hands. "I am delighted to see you, and so I am sure the Field Marshal would if he were here."

"I wish to heaven he was, my dear B——," replied Fitzgerald, "for I'm in a fix, I want

him to help me out of." And, without further ado, he told Mr. B—— how he was situated, adding, "What I wish you to do is, to forward this letter for me."

"I'll be sure the Field Marshal gets it," said Mr. B——. "I'll enclose it with one from myself, forcibly representing your case."

"Make it short, then," rejoined Fitzgerald, smiling. "You know how the Duke dislikes reading long letters."

"Not more than I do writing them!" returned Mr. B——, laughing. "Besides, I think I ought to understand the Duke by this time, as well as you do, Fitzgerald. I say, what a dinner that was we had after Waterloo, wasn't it?"

"Melancholy, indeed!" said Fitzgerald.

"Ah! people little know the Duke who call him iron," continued Mr. B——; "if they'd seen him then—"

"They would do him more justice," said Fitzgerald. "I suppose you don't know when he returns to England?"

he'll have lots of things to give away, in which I can make myself useful."

"Or you would get nothing, I can tell you," continued Mr. B——. "The Duke makes hard bargains for His Majesty. He is a hard working man himself, and keeps everybody else up to their work. Well, good-bye, if you wont stay longer. I'll be sure His Grace gets your letter."

"So far so good!" thought Fitzgerald, as he hurried home; "Susan will be delighted."

Lady Susan was delighted, especially as she too had to report progress.

"We are fortunate!" she exclaimed; "for I've been equally successful as yourself. Only think, my dear, I've discovered the sweetest little cottage that will just suit us, not an hour's walk from town.''

"Glad of it! How did you manage that?" asked her husband.

"When we got to the Maitlands, with whom you will be pleased, Herbert, we found them on the point of starting for a large nursery garden that was near, and as Mrs. Sugden wanted flowers we all went together."

"Well?"

"Well—as we were rambling about the gardens we stumbled on a neat white cottage, in a quiet nook, covered with vines, a most charming bed of crysanthemums in full bloom just under the window. On enquiry, it turned out that the cottage was to be let furnished for a mere trifle, as from its retired situation few persons would like it."

"I'll look after it to-morrow," cried her husband, rubbing his hands. "This is the best news of all."

"Isn't it?" said his wife. "I shall be as happy there as a queen."

"If we get it," said her husband, laughing;

Maitland says, and she has promised to look out for a little maid for me, and we shall have them for neighbours, and—"

"Ah! to be sure!" cried Fitzgerald, laughing. "You'll make out next that our being ruined was one of the most fortunate things that could have happened to us."

But Fitzgerald's good fortune did not end here. When Sugden came home, he said—

"Herbert, I congratulate you. You've an opportunity now of employing your leisure time, not only pleasantly, but profitably."

"In what way?"

"By contributing to the —— Magazine, which, you know, is exclusively military. The proprietor, who is a client of mine, pays well for first rate articles, which you are in every way qualified to write."

"Do you think so?"

"I'm sure so."

"Then fire away!" said Fitzgerald, "if I don't succeed it shan't be for want of doing my best. I'll work up an article immediately."

"That's right! Spice it well," cried Sugden, laughing; "everything, my dear fellow, depends on the seasoning."

"Never fear," rejoined Fitzgerald. "I'll adapt it to the strongest stomach. I'll abuse the proper persons, and laud the proper persons, taking especial care not to fall foul of the government, because—"

"Because what?" asked Sugden.

"Because I expect to get something from them."

"Bravo!" cried Sugden, laughing. "I see you understand these ins and outs of a writer's—"

"Interest," said Fitzgerald, smiling.

CHAPTER XV.

FITZGERALD did not allow "the grass to grow under his feet," but rose at daybreak and worked hard at the Magazine article until breakfast, after which he accompanied Mrs. Sugden and his wife to Fulham.

The cottage surpassed his expectations, and he lost not an hour in securing it. The party then called on the Maitlands, who seemed gratified at the prospect of having such neighbours; and Mrs. Maitland undertook to make all necessary arrangements for Lady Susan, and report progress on Friday, when she and her husband were to dine in Russell Square.

The Maitlands were punctual to their engagement, and Mrs. Maitland said—

"I am happy to tell you, Lady Susan, you may get into your cottage as soon as you please. All is ready."

"Thank you, Mrs. Maitland," said Lady Susan, "but what about the servant?"

"Oh, I've got you a little maid, who is quite a character."

"I hope she *has* one," cried Mrs. Sugden.

"Of course," replied Mrs. Maitland, "or I should not have engaged her. The girl comes well recommended, and though she is only sixteen years of age, I'm told, she is as steady as a judge."

"I've known some judges not remarkable for that quality," said Sugden, "so amend your plea, my dear lady."

"Oh! I'm before the court, am I?" said Mrs. Maitland, laughing. "Well, then, the girl's as steady as—as yourself. Will that plea do, Mr. Sugden?"

maid is a trifle more modest, and immensely less conceited."

"She's conceited enough in all conscience," said Mr. Maitland. "That seems to be her foible."

"You should remember, my dear," said Mrs. Maitland, "she has been a school monitor, not so much for the superiority of her ability, as for her tact in keeping order, and this brief authority has made her a little pragmatical and consequential, that's all."

"Oh! I shall not mind that," said Lady Susan, "if she does her work well, and is as steady as—"

"Our learned friend here," cried her husband, pointing to Sugden.

"*Et tu, Brute!*"

Dinner was announced, after which Fitz-

gerald and Lady Susan sang some of their duets, to the great delight of Mr. Maitland, who was not only fond of, but a judge of good music, and consequently appreciated it.

"Remarkably pleasant people," said Fitzgerald, when the visitors were gone.

"And most estimable," pursued Mrs. Sugden. "You could not have better neighbours."

"Yes—frank, friendly, and intelligent," pursued her husband, "without the slightest affectation or pretension."

"They appear so," said Lady Susan; "but there's an air of melancholy abstraction sometimes about Mr. Maitland which assures me he has been unfortunate."

"He has, indeed," replied Mrs. Sugden. "He has met with a disappointment most men would have sunk under."

"Yes! He narrowly escaped being made a bishop, poor fellow," said Sugden.

"Escaped being made a bishop!" echoed Fitzgerald.

of our first-rate public schools, when, most unfortunately for him, the head mastership—a most lucrative appointment, and a sure road to a bishopric—became vacant."

"Why unfortunately?" asked Fitzgerald.

"Because Maitland suffered himself to be over-persuaded to stand candidate for the situation, to qualify himself for which he was obliged to give up the appointment he held—a good fifteen hundred a year.

"A dangerous move," said Fitzgerald.

"Dangerous with a vengeance!" pursued Sugden, "for it lost him the game. He was entirely beggared by it, and all his prospects blighted."

"Yes; and what renders it more mortifying," said his wife, "Maitland lost the election only by one."

"Only by one!" exclaimed Lady Susan.

"Only by one."

"You may well call him unfortunate," pursued Lady Susan.

"I know but one disappointment more bitter, because it was wholly unmerited," said Fitzgerald.

"What was that?" asked Sugden.

"Wellington's being superseded at Vimiera and his victorious course arrested. Imagine, if you can, the bitterness of his feelings when he turned to his staff, and said, 'Gentlemen, there is nothing more for us to do. We may go and shoot red partridges.'"

"I should have felt more inclined to shoot the *imbecile* who superseded him," said Sugden.

Monday being fixed for moving into the cottage, Fitzgerald called at Apsley House, and left his new address with Mr. B——. It was further arranged that, to prevent gossiping, they should simply pass as Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald, and the servants and the Maitlands were cautioned accordingly.

thing happens to put you out of conceit with your new quarters, your old ones are ready to receive you."

"Thanks—thanks!" cried Lady Susan; "in that case we shall not scruple to avail ourselves of your offer."

"And come and see us often," said Fitzgerald, springing into the carriage. "It will do Master Herbert good. He may open his pipes at the cottage, and cry there as loud as he likes without disturbing anybody."

"We'll see what can be done," cried Sugden. "Drive on, John."

On reaching Fulham, Fitzgerald directed John to turn down a somewhat narrow lane, by the side of the nursery ground, which brought them to a door in the wall.

"Well, I'm blowed!" thought the footman, as he got down, "if this isn't a curi-

osity." "Am I to ring here, sir?" he said, aloud.

"Yes," answered Fitzgerald; "this is the private entrance. Now mind, James, what I cautioned you about."

"Never fear, sir, I'm up," cried the latter, giving a tug at the bell. "Wants to be *incodge*, s'pose, as they call it," he said in a soft voice.

"Ay, ay, that's it, James; or they'd never box themselves up in such a place as this. I shall never get the horses out again."

The door was opened by the new maid, a quaint looking little body, as clean as a smelt, on her head a cap large enough to have extinguished her.

"Mr. Fitzgerald's, ain't it?" whispered the footman, still rather dubious.

"Yes, it is," replied the little maid, consequentially. "This is 'is 'ouse, and he resides in it as sich. Bring in the packages, and place them in the 'all. The trunks came by the carrier, last night."

git no champagne. Open the coach door can't ye! and let my master and missus out."

In the parlour they found Mrs. Maitland.

"This is indeed kind," cried Lady Susan, pressing Mrs. Maitland's hands between both of her own.

"Well, I thought I'd better come over after breakfast," replied the latter, "and see how the little maid was getting on. The small creature really manages admirably, and has got everything in the best possible order for you."

"I think so, truly," said Lady Susan, glancing around her. "The place looks like a perfect little paradise!"

"Doesn't it?" cried Fitzgerald, who had just come in from dismissing the servants. "I can tell you, the Duke would have jumped at such quarters in the Pyrenees."

"He mustn't have jumped very high then," said Mrs. Maitland, laughing; "or he would have knocked his head against the ceiling. I'll leave you to yourselves, now, good folks," added she, rising, "but shall expect you to dinner, which you can't get comfortably here to-day?"

"Thank you," cried Fitzgerald; "I'm too old a campaigner to refuse your offer. Besides, I want your 'gude man' to look over my MS. for me before I send it in. Sugden tells me he's a first rate critic, and I shall be glad of his suggestions."

CHAPTER XIV.

Leaving our hero and heroine for the present, we must transfer the scene to Lord Overdone's town house, at which his Lordship and Lady Overdone had arrived a few days before from their place in the Highlands, *en route* for Eveden, where they purposed passing the Christmas holidays.

"But consider, Overdone!" pleaded her ladyship.

"I have considered, my dear," replied his lordship, pausing in the letter he was writing; "I always do. I never act without consideration, nor is it likely I should do so in a point which so materially concerns us all. Our

daughter has chosen to marry Mr. Coventry, not only against my consent, but against my repeatedly expressed remonstrances. She must take the consequences, and so must we, and do the best we can as well for her, poor child!" added he, sighing; "as for ourselves."

"Who would have thought the fellow would have turned out such a brute!" exclaimed her ladyship, fretfully.

"What reliance can you place in a selfish, incorrigible spendthrift?" continued his lordship; "disappointed as he has been. You see, after I resorted to extreme measures, and forbade all intercourse between them, he chose to persevere in the belief that I would relent; and now that he finds himself mistaken, he vents all his spleen and ill-temper on his victim."

"Sarah says in her letter she has hardly a rag to her back, or a morsel to put into her mouth. We can't let the poor girl starve, my dear."

the views I had for her establishment. But to send her money, my love, would be worse than useless. That wretch would instantly take it from her, and spend it on his reckless companions. I see but one way of proceeding —insisting on Sarah's separating herself from the scamp, in which case I will make her such an allowance as will enable her to live like a gentlewoman, but nothing more."

"I agree with you. That will be decidedly the best plan, though it cuts me to the heart to think I shall never see my poor child again."

"Then I'll go on with my letter to Danton, and tell him to see Sarah on the subject."

Here the butler announced that Booth was in the hall.

"Booth!" exclaimed his lordship. "What does the fellow want?"

"Can't say, my lord; but he seems very anxious to speak to you."

"Bid him begone," cried the peer. "I'm surprised he has the impudence to show his face here after—"

"Here he is, my lord," said the butler, and Booth walked in.

His dress was shabby in the extreme, and he had evidently lost that jaunty brisk air for which he had been remarkable.

"How dare you intrude yourself here, sir?" demanded his lordship, angrily.

"Poverty is hard to bear, my lord," replied Booth, humbly. "My wife and child are starving, and—"

"Why did you place yourself in such a position, then?" interrupted his lordship, sternly. "You did it voluntarily—needlessly. Why should you expect that mercy you have not shewn me?"

"Indeed, my lord—"

"I tell you," interrupted his lordship, furiously, "you have not borne out the character

that you could want. You had only to do your duty faithfully and conscientiously, and yet—"

"I do assure you, my lord, you're mistaken," exclaimed Booth, anxiously. "You are, indeed!—at least, so far as I'm concerned. I don't undertake to excuse my wife. I know it was very wrong in her to allow Mr. Coventry to address his letters to her, after your lordship had forbidden your daughter to correspond with him. I know it was very wrong indeed; and I don't complain of your lordship's dismissing *her;* but as for myself, I most solemnly declare, my lord, I knew nothing whatever about it. I was as ignorant of it as your lordship was yourself."

"How dare you tell such an impudent lie, sir?" cried the enraged peer. "How can

you have the assurance to say that you were ignorant of it, when Mr. Coventry mentions, in no less than five of the letters my daughter left behind her, that you were privy to the elopement, and ready to assist them in it, which I've no doubt you did."

"As I hope to be saved—as there's a Heaven above!" cried Booth, clasping his hands. "I'd nothing whatever to do with it, my lord, as both the butler and housekeeper are ready to testify; and I humbly hope your lordship, in justice to an innocent man—"

"You plead in vain," said his lordship, rising, "your complicity is evident; you have chosen to play the game against me, and must abide by your luck. I have taken my course, and am prepared to justify it. If you think I have wronged you, you know your remedy," and so saying his lordship left the library.

"I hope I shall meet with more pity from your ladyship," said Booth, appealing to Lady Overdone, "my wife used to be a favorite of your ladyship's, you allowed us to

into Booth's hands. "His lordship is angry with you both, that—"

"I humbly thank your ladyship," said the poor man, wiping his eyes, "this must support us for the present. But if his lordship won't assist me," muttered he, as he was going, "I know who both can and shall, or it will be the worse for him."

Lady Overdone rose and paced the room. Suddenly pausing before a superb table filled with costly articles, she exclaimed—

"What do all these articles of *virtu* signify, and all our wealth, to boot; they cannot unmarry Sarah. They cannot give me back my daughter. They cannot give happiness!"

CHAPTER XVI.

YES! living at Fulham proved a great success—a brillant move in the somewhat difficult game the Fitzgeralds had to play. The cottage had been occupied by one of the partners in the nursery ground, who, on the death of his mother, had moved into a larger and better furnished house. Beyond a piano for Lady Susan, and an escritoire for Fitzgerald, few extras were required. Then there was a small room in which Fitzgerald did his writing, a nice little kitchen for the servant, and nice little servant for the kitchen, with beds of the latest flowers all blooming under the windows, and all in a situation so snug and

the Maitlands called upon them every day. Mrs. Sugden, too, drove down with the nurse and the baby at least three times a week, bringing fish, fruit, groceries &c., &c., under pretence that these things could not be got good at Fulham; and Sugden, who was occupied all the week in Court, came down regularly every Sunday, as wild and full of spirits as a boy just let loose from school, and once—tell it not in Gath—he brought the Lord Chief Justice down with him, when both behaved in such a way, that the little maid, scandalized at their conduct, declared indignantly, "that they ort to be 'shamed of theyselves, kicking up such games on the Sabbath; the old gent in perticklar, who ort to know better, was the wosser of the two!"

We must, however, state that while all this rollicking was going on, Fitzgerald and

his wife were in church, in the vicar's pew, a great privilege, as the sittings were very scarce, and indeed not to be obtained.

In short, time flew pleasantly on at the cottage, and the demon *ennui* had never yet ventured to set his foot there. Fitzgerald occupied all the morning at his writing, while Lady Susan found her utilitarianism come into full play in superintending her little household; not that her maid gave her the slightest trouble, for she worked with a will, and never appeared so happy as when she had a broom, or a scrubbing brush in her hand. Indeed it was difficult to determine whether the maid was not the happiest of the three; having no cares, and no ambition beyond "a rigler 'ouse maid," as she called it, when she was old enough for "the cittywashon."

As Sugden had predicted, Fitzgerald found an able and judicious critic in Mr. Maitland, who corrected mistakes, proposed alterations, and what was more valuable than all, struck out superfluous matter, and by so doing bring-

Sometimes the Fitzgeralds dined with the Sugdens, but not often, on account of the expense. Fitzgerald frequently walked into town to see Wilson, and inquire at Apsley House when the Duke was expected to return, or whether any answer to his letter had arrived.

Six weeks passed; the Christmas holidays were over, but no Duke, or signs of the Duke, and both Fitzgerald and Lady Susan began to get uneasy, for though their expenses were small, their stock of ready money was diminishing. Things were in this state, when one morning Fitzgerald, tired of writing, threw down his pen, and seizing his hat, strolled out for a walk. He had not been gone long, when the little maid, bolting into the parlour, with a knife, she was cleaning, in her hand, exclaimed—

"Oh! ma'am, there's a mad gentleman escaped from the hasylum at the end of the lane, and the keepers' are arter him!"

"A mad gentleman!"

"Yes, ma'am; a crazy, cracked lunnatic, out of 'is seven senses. Uncle, whos' one of the keepers, has just tapped at the kitchin winder, to tell me he's sure the poor gentleman has hid hisself somewhere's about the gardens."

"In the gardens!"

"Yes, ma'am; and we're to keep our doors and winders shut, please, lest he should get into the 'ouse, for he's werry wicious sometimes, uncle says, and might do us a mischief; so I've locked the door, ma'am."

"You've done right, my good girl," said Lady Susan, fastening the window; "it would be very awkward if he paid us a visit, now your master is out."

"Oh! there he is, ma'am, there he is!" cried the maid, running behind her mistress. "That must be him as sure as a gun!" and

maid, peeping. "I declare I'm all in a fluster, ma'am. It's easy to see he's a madman by his eye."

"Hollo there!" cried the supposed lunatic, tapping at the window.

The maid drew her mistress back.

"Don't take no notice of him, ma'am, whispered she, "nor don't open the winder whatsomdever yer does. I was never in such a fright afore in all my born days! Never!"

"This is really very perplexing," said Lady Susan. "As you say, my girl, there is something very remarkable about his eyes which—"

The stranger went round to the door, and knocked.

The girl screamed and clung to her mistress.

"Oh! goodness gracious! What will be-

come of us!" exclaimed she, clinging still closer. "There! Now he's a trying the lock ma'am; if it should give—"

"I wish my husband was here," said Lady Susan, getting frightened herself; "and yet—if he returns and encounters this unhappy—"

"Thank 'evin!" interrupted the maid, joyfully; "the man's took hisself off, ma'am. I seed him go by the winder." Then throwing it up, she beckoned to two of the gardeners, who were passing at the moment.

"Well, what is it, Miss Stuck-up?" enquired one.

"There! there he goes! Don't you see him?" cried she, eagerly pointing after the stranger.

"See who? Who d'ye mean?"

"Why the madman to be sure. That's him!"

"Is it by —!" cried the other gardener, clutching his rake.

"Yes, didn't I tell you it war him. Run and warn uncle, and—"

"The deuce it is!" cried his companion. "Here's at him then. If he's obstropolus, I'll knock him down with this here hoe, you know."

So saying they stole through the evergreen after the stranger, who, having got to the end of the walk, began to retrace his steps, and was on the point of again knocking at the cottage door, when the two gardeners, suddenly darting from their ambush, intercepted him.

"No, you don't," exclaimed the first gardener, raising his hoe.

"Can't allow you to meddle with the women," said the second, uplifting his rake.

The stranger stared, and a smiled played about the corners of his mouth.

"Are you both mad!" said he, at length.

"Mad!" echoed the man with the hoe.

"Bless you! nothing of the sort. We're none on us mad—only friendly and agreeable."

"Aye, friendly and agreeable, that's all," pursued the proprietor of the rake, clutching the stranger's arm. "All we want is for you jist to come along with us, and—"

"Where are we to go?" interrupted the supposed lunatic, extricating himself.

"Oh! not fur—not fur," rejoined the man who had spoken first, in a most insinuating tone. "Bless you! it's quite close, but it ain't the place you come from, so you needn't be afeared of that."

"Oh! dear no. It's a werry much nicer place," urged his companion. "The gentleman's a werry good gentleman. You'll have plenty o' clean straw, and no questions axed; and as for strong hale, there's no hend on it."

"Enough of this folly," said the stranger, sharply. "You are either drunk, or you've mistaken me for somebody else, so stand aside, and—"

"Come, none of that," shouted both gar-

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Fitzgerald, coming up.

"Matter enough," growled the men. "This insane lunatic—"

"By Heaven! it's Wellington!" again exclaimed Fitzgerald, running to the rescue.

"Wellington!" echoed the gardeners, aghast.

"Yes—be off, you rascals."

The men required no second bidding.

"You came up like Blucher in our last battle," said the Duke, laughing.

"I can scarcely believe my eyes!" cried Fitzgerald. "But how came your Grace—"

"Oh! it's some mistake not worth inquiring into," interrupted the Duke, decapitating a chrysanthemum with his whip; "but give me your hand, Fitzgerald, I'm very glad to see you."

"Not half so glad as I am to see your Grace," said Fitzgerald, delighted. "Why, when did you arrive?"

"Yesterday evening," replied the Duke, "I was summoned home quite unexpectedly. I received your letter in due course, but refrained from answering it until I could do so to some purpose. I left my horses in the road, walked in, concluded this was your cottage, couldn't gain admittance, walked about, saw no one, and was going to try my fortune again, when—but this isn't the first time I've been taken for a madman," continued the Duke, laughing, "you all thought me mad at Torres Vedras, you know."

"Your Grace proved wiser than us all, though," said Fitzgerald.

"Yes; I saw clearer; responsibility quickened my perceptions. Nothing sharpens a man's eyes more than having the fear of the debates in the Houses and the press continually before him, Fitzgerald. Now, what is it you

thinks will suit me, and in which I can be useful."

"Of course, the country before all," said the Duke; "but I know you're worth your salt, and always work with a will. I suppose you've no objection to the Colonies?"

"None whatever, only as my wife accompanies me—"

"A commissariship at Sierra Leone would not exactly suit you," said the Duke, smiling.

"Why, not exactly," rejoined Fitzgerald, laughing.

"Well, we must give you something better," said the Duke. "There's a capital situation now vacant at Montreal. What do you say to that?"

"I ask nothing better," replied Fitzgerald, eagerly, "the climate is excellent, and the society good."

"Very well," said the Duke, rising, "we will consider that point settled. Now introduce me to your wife. I'm told you've married the best and prettiest girl in all the peerage."

"It is my happiness to think so, my lord," returned Fitzgerald. "This way."

CHAPTER XVII.

Lady Susan was overwhelmed with confusion when she found that she had treated the hero of a hundred battles so discourteously, but when the Duke made no allusion to the *contre-temps*, she recovered her self-possession, and regarded with an interest the most intense the man whom, of all others, she had most wished to see. She was much struck with the quickness of the Duke's perceptions; the ease and simplicity of his manners; and his adaptability to circumstances. He instantly seized on the salient points of a subject; laughed heartily at anything that approached the humorous, and ate and drank of whatever

was placed before him, without hesitation. He was evidently greatly impressed by the rare beauty of Lady Susan, more so, perhaps, if the truth were known, than Fitzgerald exactly liked; but if the Duke admired Lady Susan, he was not a little amused by the maid. The latter, the moment she saw the supposed maniac enter, ran and locked herself up in the coal-hole, from which her mistress, with the greatest difficulty, induced her to emerge, to prepare luncheon, for which the Duke had asked.

She waited on them during the meal with open eyes and mouth, wonder-struck at hearing her master called "Major," her mistress "Your Ladyship," and their guest "Duke," and "Your Grace." As her astonishment, however, abated, her self-conceit regained its ascendency, and she became more grandiose than ever, from coming into contact with such exalted personages. She carried her nose like a pig in the wind, and when the baker's boy ventured to joke with her, she bade him,

In the evening Sugden came down. He laughed heartily at the Duke's adventure, but his joy at hearing of the good fortune of his friends was greatly damped at the prospect of losing them.

"You owe seeing me to-night," added he, "to a very unexpected circumstance, about which I want you both to give me your advice."

"It must be something very unusual," said Fitzgerald, "that induces you to ask it."

"It is something very unusual and very perplexing," rejoined the lawyer. "It involves no less than giving up my practice."

"Giving up your practice!" echoed both his listeners.

"Yes, and living in the country," continued Sugden, pulling out a letter.

"It must be something tempting indeed,

to induce you to do that," observed Fitzgerald. "But go on—go on."

"Ay, let us hear what this inducement is?" pursued Lady Susan, pausing in her work.

"Why, I was very much surprised," proceeded Sugden; "to find from this letter, which I received this morning, that a distant relation, whom I never saw in my life, is dead, and has left me, as his agent tells me, an estate in Hampshire, on condition that I reside on it six months at least in every year, which, of course I can't do without giving up my profession."

"Is the estate large?" enquired Fitzgerald.

"It is," replied Sugden; "a good five thousand a year, the agent writes. Maud, who hates London, is for my accepting it."

"I incline to her opinion," said Lady Susan.

"So do I, decidedly," cried Fitzgerald.

"Well, I'm not altogether against it my-

up without due consideration."

"Certainly not," said Lady Susan, again pausing in her work. "The income you derive from your profession is doubtless large, with every prospect of its increasing, to say nothing of ulterior advantages still more important. On the other hand, your health may fail, and if you accept this estate, let what will happen, your wife and family are provided for, and well provided for. Besides, after all," continued Lady Susan, smiling; "both roads lead to the same goal."

"You mean either can place me in Parliament?" said Sugden.

Lady Susan nodded, adding, "When we further consider the pure air, elbow-room, and other home advantages—"

"Including a shooting jacket life," inter-

rupted Fitzgerald. "I think you will admit, my dear Sugden, the courts have the worst of it."

"I think they have," replied the latter. "My dear Lady Susan, you and your husband have summed up admirably. My mind is made up. Into the country we go."

"And *out* of the country we go," said Fitzgerald, sighing. "But after all that's better than staying here and starving; I wish some relative I never saw would leave me five thousand a year."

"So! good folks, you've had fine work here I find," exclaimed Mrs. Maitland, entering. "The town's in a ferment, and all sorts of stories are in circulation."

"Why, what do they say?" enquired Fitzgerald.

"Say! I can't tell you what they don't say!" rejoined Mrs. Maitland, laughing. "Some will have it that you are a Polish adventurer and Lady Susan an Arch-Duchess, and that the Duke's come over about it.

you are the 'old gentleman' himself!"

"Upon my word I'm extremely obliged to you," said Fitzgerald, smiling.

"And pray what do they say of me?" enquired Sugden.

"You! Oh! that you are the said 'old gentleman's' advocate, of course retained for the defence. The poor gardener who used the Duke so roughly, came in a great fright to my husband to beg he'd intercede for them; so he went back with them, and met the Duke just coming out of the nursery ground."

"I suppose he'd forgotten all about it?" said Fitzgerald.

"Every tittle!" answered Mrs. Maitland. "However, he gave the poor fellows a guinea, for which he ought to be fined himself, as they most assuredly will for being drunk and disorderly.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE following week Fitzgerald received an official notification of his appointment, directing him to be at Portsmouth by the end of the month, in readiness to embark for Montreal; and as recent events had entailed an unpleasant notoriety on our cottagers, they removed, to the great regret of the Maitlands, into lodgings in Bloomsbury Square, preferring this to locating with the Sugdens, who were busied, like themselves, in preparing for their departure.

Lady Susan decided on retaining their quaint little maid, to the great delight of the latter, though her joy was somewhat damped

by the baker's boy assuring her, that the bread in Canada was all made of sawdust, and that if she blew her nose too hard in winter it would come off into her pocket handkerchief.

At length the day arrived when the Sugdens were to leave for Hampshire.

"God bless you, my dear Lady Susan," said Mrs. Sugden, kissing her for the twentieth time, "and you, too, my dear Major!" added she, wringing Fitzgerald's hand and presenting her cheek, "May your voyage prove prosperous! May we all meet again when envious Fortune can no longer part us, and renew an intercourse we have all found so gratifying."

"Amen! amen! with my whole heart," responded both her friends.

"And this hope," continued Lady Susan, pressing Mrs. Sugden's hand between both her own, "this hope, my sweetest friend, shall comfort and sustain us when our hearts sicken, as those shores so dear to us sink beneath the horizon. It shall cheer and

comfort us amid the gloom and severity of a Canadian winter; nor will we forget," added she, smiling, "the days we've passed together, which, though alloyed in some degree by losses and privations, have nevertheless been among the happiest of our existence."

"And of mine, too," said Mrs. Sugden, sobbing. "I'm sure I don't know how I shall ever —"

"Come, come," said her husband, interposing, "you forget time flies, Maud, and that Herbert and his nurse have been in the carriage these ten minutes."

"Yes, it's all very well for you to talk in that way, my dear," said Mrs. Sugden, pouting, "you are to meet them again at Portsmouth, whereas poor I—"

"Indeed we shall be late, my love," interrupted Sugden, hurrying her into the carriage. Then, giving Fitzgerald a letter, he added, "Here, read this, Herbert; it's from your brother, in answer to an application of mine in your behalf, and came this morning. On

The letter was as follows:—

"So! beggars are they! Good. Let them starve, not all at once, but lingering, lingering on; hoping, but always disappointed, until they can hope no longer, and death, in its most hideous form, put an end to their protracted agonies, to abate one jot of which I would not put out my little finger, if it possessed the power of doing so.

"A. FITZGERALD."

"Infamous!" exclaimed Fitzgerald, disgusted, and tore the offensive letter into pieces, which he scattered to the winds.

Fitzgerald's stay in London was drawing to a close, and he went with Lady Susan to take a last leave of poor old Wilson.

"I think we're like a pair of scissors, Master

Herbert," said she, sighing, " we only meet to part again. I cannot expect to live till your return. Why didn't the Duke give you something at home, and not send you and this dear lady here to be frost-bitten in Canada?"

" We must not look the gift horse in the mouth, you know, my dear Wilson," said Fitzgerald, laughing.

" True, true," replied the old lady, " but I do wish he had given you something in old England, for all that." Then taking him aside, she said, " I must mention, while I think of it, what I've resolved to do fifty times, and ought to have told you or Mr. Sugden long, long before; but my memory is sadly failing me, and I've always forgotten it."

" What is it?"

" Why, when you were at Spa, it may be seven or eight months ago now, a foreign letter came for Sir Alfred, which I'm quite sure was from Dobree."

during the time she was living with your mother. I forwarded the letter instantly. I hope my forgetting to mention this hasn't done mischief."

"No; I don't see how it can," replied Fitzgerald, thoughtfully; "but I'm glad I know it. Can we do anything for you, Wilson?"

"Nothing, thank you, Master Herbert. Only write sometimes. Let me know you've arrived safe, and how you both are."

"Certainly. I will be sure to do so. Now, Susan."

"Quite ready," replied the latter.

They took an affectionate leave of Wilson and departed.

As they did so a man stole up the steps.

"Booth!" exclaimed Wilson.

"Tell me," said he, "wasn't that the Major and Lady Susan?"

"Yes."

"I heard he'd married her," rejoined Booth, "but I wasn't aware they were in England. Where are they living?"

"Why do you ask?" enquired the housekeeper, snappishly. "The Major can't assist you; he can't give you a character. I shall not tell you where he lives; I'll not have you troubling him."

"I've no intention of doing so, Heaven knows," replied Booth, humbly; "but I should like to have the Major's address, not perhaps, so much for my own sake as for his."

"What do you mean?" demanded Wilson, turning sharp upon him. "How can it ever be in your power to assist Major Fitzgerald?"

"I don't say it ever will be, Mrs. Wilson, only—"

"Only what?"

"It might, you know."

"I know nothing of the sort," returned the housekeeper, contemptuously. "You only

haven't told you my business yet."

"Well, what is it?"

"I want to see Sir Alfred, and ask him to assist me."

"He will not give you a penny!"

"I can't think that, Mrs. Wilson; he always liked me, and I liked him, in spite of his nasty temper. He gave me such a character to Lord Overdone, that his lordship snapped at me at once. I have not troubled Sir Alfred, nor would I if I could possibly avoid it. But now I'm so poor, that I must come to a proper understanding with him."

"What do you mean by proper understanding?" asked Wilson.

"That's our affair," rejoined Booth; "but as it's a long journey to Copton Hall, and I'm not very flush of money just at present, I want you to lend me a small sum, which I

shall soon be able to repay, as Sir Alfred *must* assist me."

"Why *must*?"

"No matter. Will you let me have the money?"

"How much?"

"Six pounds."

"Well, walk in, and I'll see what I can do for you."

CHAPTER XIX.

Booth was up before daylight to prepare for his journey. The Fitzgeralds did the same, while a third party, in actual progress, was rapidly approaching our shores, and though each of these said parties was in total ignorance of the movements of the others, all were nevertheless, conducing to one and the same end. What that end was, we cannot stop to narrate, being compelled to attend without delay to the motions only of Booth.

"What are you rummaging for there, Booth?" asked his wife, who, wrapped up in an old shawl, was warming some coffee in a tin-pot for her husband's breakfast.

"What I can't find, for the soul of me!" replied Booth, pettishly. "I'll swear I locked the paper up in this box here, and now—"

"Ay, that's always the way, my dear," said his wife, soothingly. "When one wants a thing, one's sure never to be able to find it. Is this paper of such consequence then?"

"Of such consequence that I can't go without it," rejoined her husband. "If I don't take it with me, I may as well stay here and starve. I shall only put myself to the trouble and expense of the journey for nothing."

"Why, what *is* this paper, my dear?" enquired his wife, eagerly. "Is it a promissory note, or—"

"Oh! never you mind what it is," interrupted her husband, angrily, turning over the olla podrida in the box for the twentieth time. "D'ye think I don't know what I'm about, you fool? Ask no questions, but

sound," cried her husband, joyfully. "Yes, it's all right; I was in a precious stew, though, about it, I can tell you," continued he, replacing the paper in the envelope, and putting it carefully in an inner pocket. "Now give me a cup of coffee—quick, will you, old girl! I must be at 'The Bull and Mouth' by eight, and it only wants forty minutes."

"Here, it's all ready, my dear," cried his wife, pouring out the coffee.

Booth drank it off, then putting on his great coat, he kissed his wife, and, saying "Good-bye! God bless you!" hurried off.

"Don't forget to write," cried his wife, calling after him.

"Never fear—never fear," replied he, quickening his pace. "I'll make Sir Alfred

listen to reason, or it shall be the worse for him."

On the evening of the second day the coach dropped our traveller at a village not far from Copton Hall, where he put up for the night.

As Booth did not wish to be recognised, he kept in his room, seeing no one but the landlord of the inn and his family, who were strangers. He gleaned enough, however, there, to convince him that the business he was going on required a good foundation, so he made a hearty breakfast next morning before he set out for Copton Hall.

"Hadn't you better have a guide?" said the landlord, as he was leaving the house.

"No," replied Booth, carelessly, "I'm only going for a stroll, I shall soon be back." Then slouching his hat over his face, and keeping his handkerchief to his mouth, as if he was suffering from the toothache, he hurried through the village, and proceeded at a rapid pace up a lofty mountain until he came to a

ous tenement of dark grey stone, on the margin of a large pond, so black that it might have been mistaken for a reservoir of pitch. With the exception of some stunted cabbages choked with nettles, in the garden of this desolate dwelling, not a trace of vegetation or living thing could be seen.

"Well! this is a queer place for Sir Alfred to take a fancy to!" soliloquised Booth, getting on the lee side of a huge boulder, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "I remember coming up here years ago, when the overseer of the slate quarries lived in the house there; it was dull enough then to make a man crazy, and it's ten times worse now; but some one is coming," and peeping, Booth saw a horseman, who proved to be Mr. Billing, issue from a small side yard. The agent passed so near the boulder that Booth heard

him say, "Lucky I got off in a whole skin; I never saw him in such a fury before; and Nell's almost as bad as he is!"

"Pleasant look out for me!" muttered Booth. "Shall I wait till the lion cools down, or shall I beard him in his den at once. Hang it! I'll go in. I never feared him yet, and I can't afford to do so now. I'll be civil but firm. I hope the paper's safe."

Having ascertained this, Booth boldly walked up to a side-door that opened into the kitchen, and knocked. Receiving no answer, he was on the point of lifting the latch, when a tall, ferocious-looking female, with a mahogany face, and coal-black eyes, issued from a small shed, with a chopper in her hand, and a bundle of wood in her apron, and gruffly asked him what he wanted.

"I wish to speak to Sir Alfred Fitzgerald," replied Booth.

"Do you?" replied Cranky Nell, for it was she. "Then you may take yourself off again, for he won't see none on you," and she was

pursued me. I've very particular business with him, and—"

"Stand out of the way!" cried Nell, raising the chopper, "or I'll make mincemeat of you. Don't *dear madam* me! I want none of your chaff, I tell you. Sir Alfred won't see you. He hates you all, as much as I do, with your deceit and lies! I wish I could cut off all your heads at a blow!" added she, flourishing the chopper.

"This is all very fine, Mrs. Nell," cried Booth, "but it won't do with me."

"Oh! won't it," said Nell, grinning.

"No it won't," replied Booth, snatching up a bill-hook that stood near him. "I tell you I must see Sir Alfred, and I will. So stand aside, and let me pass, or it will be the worse for you," added he sternly. "Sir Alfred would never forgive you if you prevented my seeing him."

Nell looked as if she meant mischief, but Booth's glance was as threatening.

"You're a bold spark!" said she, at length, putting down the chopper; "and I suppose you must see him. Come in, if you're so bent upon it! But mind," added she, shooting the contents of her apron into a corner, "I caution you it's dangerous to break in upon him now. He's always worse after Billing has been with him. Who are you?"

"Booth. I lived with Sir Alfred many years, and—"

"Booth!" interrupted Nell, with a sneer. "Why, you're the chap then as wrote those letters to him. I hope you've brought your coffin with you?"

"Oh! I'm not afraid of wanting that," replied Booth, putting down the bill-hook. "Nevertheless, I thank you for your caution. Now show me to him, and leave me to manage the rest."

"This way then," said Nell, leading him

into a stone passage. "That's his room," and pointing to a door she left him.

Booth knocked gently, but receiving no answer, he knocked again.

"Come in! and be cursed to you, you old hag!" roared Sir Alfred from within. "What the devil do you knock for?"

Booth lifted the latch and entered. It was a wretched looking room, and filthy in the extreme. In several places the plaister had fallen from the walls, disclosing the bare stone, while from the ceiling cobwebs hung, and the rain trickled through in several places. Sir Alfred, unwashed, unshaven, wrapped in a dirty old dressing-gown, his long uncombed hair hanging over his shoulders, was seated in a dry corner, at an oak table with his account book and a bag of guineas before him. On seeing Booth, he swept the bag into a drawer, and starting up, demanded with flashing eyes how he dared to intrude upon him.

Booth was shocked at the change which had taken place in his former master, but felt this was not the time to indulge in such a feeling. He replied, therefore, respectfully, but firmly, "that he hoped his honor would forgive the liberty he had taken, for which his servant was in no way responsible, and which nothing but the most pressing necessity on his part could have compelled him to resort to."

"And have you no fear for the consequences?" demanded Sir Alfred.

"I hoped, Sir Alfred, you would not be angry with me."

"Why should I be less angry with you than another?" retorted the baronet.

"I hoped my long services—"

"You were paid for them, were you not? Well paid too."

"I don't complain, Sir Alfred; but—"

"But what? Why are you here?"

"My wife and child are starving, Sir

"*The claim of Forbearance*," interrupted Booth, firmly.

"Forbearance!"

"Yes, of forbearance, Sir Alfred. Most men with such a *hold* as I have on you, would have used it long before now."

"Hold!" exclaimed the baronet, contemptuously. "What hold can such a worm as you have upon me?"

"Read *that*, Sir Alfred," replied Booth, giving him a paper, "and you'll see. I copied it carefully from the original, which I have in my possession."

Sir Alfred turned pale, and his hand trembled as his eye ran over the paper. But quickly recovering, he threw it down, saying, with a disdainful smile, "I don't believe there's such a document in existence."

"No! I know you don't, Sir Alfred," replied Booth. "It must appear impossible to you that it should be so. Nevertheless, incredible as you may think it, I have the original, perfectly legible, safe in my pocket here at this moment. I could not have imagined it! I couldn't have dreamt it, Sir Alfred."

"Nothing but occular demonstration can convince me of the truth of what you assert," said the baronet. "If you have the original, as you say, shew it me; a copy is nothing!"

"Look then, Sir Alfred!" cried Booth, pulling out another paper, and holding it at arm's length. "Convince yourself. Nay! I won't trust it out of my own hand. You can see it where you stand."

"Come a little nearer," said Sir Alfred, and darting forward, he made a snatch at the paper, but Booth, who was on on his guard, recoiled, and put it into his pocket again.

"What do you want for it?" asked the baronet.

Sir Alfred locked the door and put the key in his pocket. Then taking a pistol from a drawer, he said, with a threatening look, "I'll not give you the twentieth part of a shilling for it. You shall give it up for nothing, or never leave this room alive. I give you ten minutes to consider of it, by the clock there!" and he began pacing up and down the apartment.

Booth was a brave man, he knew with whom he had to deal too well not to be aware that this was not an idle threat; but his necessities were great, and he hesitated to relinquish his advantage.

"Come," said Sir Alfred, pausing. "Three minutes are gone already; will you give up the paper? If you call for assistance, nobody but Nell will hear you; and she'd rather help me to tie a stone round your

neck, and tumble your body into the tarn there, than rescue you, if she had the power, which she hasn't. Will you give up the paper?"

"Sir Alfred, this is taking a very unfair advantage of me," said Booth.

"No more than you attempted to take of me," retorted the baronet, chuckling. "You thought you had me in a trap, and now you're caught in one yourself; ha! ha! Will you give up the paper?"

Booth made no answer, and Sir Alfred resumed his promenade.

"Will you release me, Sir Alfred?" said Booth, who heartily repented that he had ever come.

"Will you give up the paper?" repeated the baronet, making a halt, and cocking his pistol. "Eight minutes gone!" But finding Booth was still silent, he started off again.

The click of the pistol struck unpleasantly on Booth's ear.

"I must make a push for it," thought he;

stone, he stumbled and fell—a lucky accident! for Sir Alfred's bullet whistled harmlessly over his head. Jumping on his feet again, Booth, without the least hesitation, threw himself down the steep side of the mountain. Dropping from crag to crag, and shelf to shelf; now checking the rapidity of his descent by grasping a clump of ferns, and now by clinging to a projecting piece of rock, until he fairly landed in the valley below, having suffered no inconvenience beyond a few slight contusions and a bullet hole in his hat. As he sped up the opposite mountain, he could see Sir Alfred still watching him from the *plateau* in front of the house. He took off his hat, and making him a very low bow, pursued his way to the village.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Fitzgeralds, on their arrival at The Anchor Hotel, found Jackson in readiness to receive them.

"Glad to see your old face again!" said Fitzgerald, shaking him by the shoulder.

"Not more glad than I am to see yer honour and my lady here," replied Jackson. "I hope yer ladyship's none the worse for yer journey?"

"All the better, thank you, Jackson," answered Lady Susan, smiling. "Seeing you again makes me feel quite at home again."

"I suppose you don't object to going to Canada, Jackson?" said Fitzgerald.

at Tady's, and jumped for joy when your letter came.'

"My man!" said the little maid, in a tone of authority, "bring up the boxes, will you? and see as the people don't steal nothink."

"My maid," said Lady Susan, in explanation, for Jackson stared at the girl, as if she was some wild animal.

"Yes! I'm my lady's maid now," pursued the girl loftily, "so you'll do as I order you, my man, if you please. When you've taken up the luggage I'll tell you what you're to do next;" and so saying she floated into the hotel after her mistress.

"My compliments to your ladyship's lady!" cried Jackson, making a very low bow, "a nice adjutant you are to take orders from. We shall have you reviewing the Horse Marines next."

Fitzgerald, who knew the discomfort of waiting at such a place as Portsmouth, sallied out to enquire for "The Magnificent," the transport in which his passage had been provided, but he found, to his extreme mortification, it had not come round yet.

"What a nuisance!" exclaimed Fitzgerald. "We shall be kept here for a week or more, kicking our heels."

In the morning Sugden arrived. He was delighted at the prospect of enjoying his friend's society so much longer than he had anticipated. He expressed himself much pleased with his place in Hampshire, and brought a host of good wishes and affectionate farewells from his wife.

"But congratulate me, good folks; congratulate me!" he continued.

"On what?" enquired Lady Susan.

"Being in the commission of the peace. I'm now J. P., at your service; a county magistrate, fairly entered; so mind what you are about both of you, or I shall commit you."

"No matter, Law and Justice don't always go together."

"Well, let us all go together," said Sugden, "and take a stroll. What say you, Lady Susan?"

"With all my heart; I'll go for my bonnet."

"By-the-bye," said Fitzgerald, when they were alone, "I've news of Dobree."

"The deuce you have!"

"Yes; she has written to my brother from New York. Wilson saw the letter. I suppose this is not material?"

"Only so far as this," replied Sugden, "it tells us three things; firstly, that Dobree is alive; secondly, where she is living; and lastly, that she continues in communication with your brother. By Jove! I've more than half a mind to run over, and ferret out Dobree myself."

"And forfeit your estate, Mr. County Magistrate, for your pains."

"Oh! I've lots of time in three months. But mum! Here's her ladyship."

Every one who has been at Portsmouth knows how little there is that is attractive in the place, and our friends, who had been there before, soon got tired of their ramble and came back to the hotel, where they amused themselves in watching, through a telescope from a bay window of their little sitting room, the ships of war and craft of all sorts, shapes, and sizes, and nations continually arriving and departing.

"That's a very fine ship that's just come in," observed Lady Susan.

"What do you make her, Mr. Justice?" said Fitzgerald.

"Oh! Yankee decidedly," cried Sugden, who was looking through the glass. "There are the stars and stripes plain enough. A boat is just leaving her."

"Let us go and see them land," cried Fitz-

"Let us go, by all means," said Lady Susan, sighing, "for my spirits are far from up to the mark, and in this state one can settle down to nothing."

"Aye, come along," said Sugden, putting down the telescope, "I don't see what we can do better." So they all three hurried down to the stairs, which were close to the hotel.

In a few minutes the boat came into shallow water, and the impatient passengers sprang out, with the exception of a young man of military bearing, who remained seated in the boat.

"Here! Bear a hand, Johnson, can't you?" cried the young officer, impatiently. "Help me to get the woman out, if you don't want her to die before she can reach the hotel?"

The sympathies of our trio were imme-

diately enlisted, and Fitzgerald and Sugden hurried to his assistance.

"Allow me?" cried Fitzgerald, taking an arm of the invalid.

The young officer stared.

"By Heaven! 'tis the Major himself," he exclaimed.

"Antrobus!" said Fitzgerald.

"Yes! It's myself, large as life, at your service, my dear Major," replied the officer, wringing Fitzgerald's hand. "But we've no time for explanations now. Let us get the woman into the hotel at once, and send for a doctor. It is of the utmost importance to you that she should not die outright."

Accordingly, the invalid was carried into the hotel; Lady Susan, and her little maid, undertook to get her into bed, while Jackson was despatched for a surgeon. This latter soon arrived. He pronounced his patient in a state of complete exhaustion, and ordering her to be kept as quiet as possible, ran home for restoratives.

very moment we reached Portsmouth! Sure, and I was terribly afraid she'd have died on the passage, and I should never have got her to England, after all the botheration I have had with her, and then, you know, I should have done you no good, for she refuses to make a clean breast of it to anybody but yourself."

"Am I in any way concerned in this poor woman?" enquired Fitzgerald.

"So she says," replied Antrobus, "and faith! I believe her; for when a woman's got one foot in the grave, she's apt to be sincere. She'll tell the truth then, any way, if she never did so before. She says what she has to communicate is of the very first importance to your well-being, Major."

"And her name?" enquired Fitzgerald, with a throbbing heart.

"Dobree."

CHAPTER XXI.

"Now, my dear Antrobus, tell us all you know of Mrs. Dobree," said Fitzgerald. "You may say anything before Mr. Sugden, he is my particular friend and adviser."

"Then he shall be my friend, if he'll allow me to call him so," replied Antrobus, bowing, "though I suspect he'd rather not be my adviser," he added, laughing, "as he'd find it no sinecure, I can tell him."

Sugden gave the Irishman his hand, who shook it warmly.

"Proceed, Mr. Antrobus," said Sugden. "I tell you at once it's of the greatest importance that we should know all concerning

I mentioned in that long yarn of letter of mine, that I'd applied for leave to come home. Well, I got it, next day, and set off for New York, having made up my mind to go that way, that I might call on that Yankee friend who shot me."

"I remember your mentioning it quite well," said Fitzgerald.

"Well, I couldn't find my friend, who'd gone South," proceeded Antrobus, "and as the hotel was crowded, they got me a room in a private house, which I wasn't sorry for, as I rather object to sleeping three in a bed, and using a common tooth brush."

"I've a prejudice against that, myself," said Sugden, laughing.

"Well, on leaving my room, next morning," continued the officer, "I found the shrew of a landlady attacking a poor

woman who lodged opposite. 'Don't tell me!' she drawled through her nose. 'Your being ill is nothing to me, I guess. If you don't cash up by one o'clock, out you go, for I want your room, I guess,' and giving her head a toss, off she went. The lodger appealed to me.

"'Isn't it scandalous, sir, in Mrs. Boucicault to treat me thus?' she exclaimed, indignantly. 'I've lodged with her nearly two years, and because I'm a little behind hand in rent, she threatens to turn me out into the street, in the state I'm in,' and she put her burning hand in mine.

"'Why, you're in a burning fever!' cried I.

"'I am. Heaven help me!' said she, sighing deeply, "for no one else can or will. Are you English?'

"'No; Irish.'

"'That's all the same. We're both King George's subjects. I'm from Lancashire. Are you going to England?'

perhaps you'd not object to cash this cheque for me; it's only for sixty dollars, and must be paid.'

"'Who is it on?' I enquired, not much relishing this request, as you may imagine."

"I suppose not!" said Fitzgerald.

"Who was the cheque on?" asked Sugden.

"Sir Alfred Fitzgerald," replied Antrobus.

"Good!" cried Sugden, "proceed."

"Well," pursued the young officer, "this poor woman, whom you'll guess was Mrs. Dobree, went on to say that she'd lived many years in the Fitzgerald family, and the baronet allowed her an annuity, which she couldn't think why it hadn't been paid lately, and she'd written home about it.

"'I nursed,' continued she, 'Sir Alfred's brother, Major Fitzgerald.'

"'Whom?' cried I. 'Whom did you say you nursed?'

"'Major Fitzgerald,' repeated she.

"'Is this the man you mean?' said I, showing her your card, which I fortunately happened to have about me.

"'The very same,' said she. 'You know him then?'

"'I've reason,' said I, 'he has been more than a father to me. He has saved me from destruction. I'd respect an old pair of boots if they'd belonged to Major Fitzgerald, let alone his nurse; so come into my room, and I'll give you the money,' which I did, and we parted."

"Had you no misgiving," asked Sugden.

"Well I had, and that's the truth," replied Antrobus, "but these all vanished the moment I entered Dobree's room in the evening, when she sent for me. I saw by the air of neatness in everything she was no impostor, even if what followed had not convinced me of it."

"'Mr. Antrobus,' said she, 'I hope you will excuse the liberty I've taken, but I find myself

way like this. Keep a stout heart, and you'll soon get over it.'

"'Over my fever, perhaps, I may,' she replied, 'my doctor tells me I shall; but, oh! Mr. Antrobus, who can cure the agonies I endure? Who can kill the worm that is perpetually gnawing at my heart? Not even the forgiveness of him I've so shamefully injured could do that!'

"'If you've injured anyone, Mrs. Dobree,' said I, 'the best thing you can do is to make every reparation in your power as speedily as possible.'

"'You are right,' cried she, 'you are right, Mr. Antrobus, and by God's help and yours, I'll set about it instantly. It's my only chance of escaping the agonies I am enduring, and worse—if worse there can be—that I shall have to endure hereafter.'

"'If I can assist you,' said I, 'I shall be happy to do so.'

"'You can assist me,' rejoined she, eagerly, 'by taking me to England, for there, and there only, can I effectually undo the dreadful harm I've done; and you will do this the more readily,' continued she, 'when I tell you that he whom I have so cruelly injured is your friend, Major Fitzgerald!'"

"I was sure some secret work had been done," said Sugden.

"Did Dobree say in what way she had injured me?" inquired Fitzgerald.

"No," replied Antrobus, "she has always refused to do so. She says she'll tell it to nobody but yourself, Major. I had the devil's own trouble with her during the voyage, she's sinking fast, and I was terribly afraid I'd not get her to England alive. You saw she was quite insensible when we carried her out of the boat."

Lady Susan entered the room.

"I must introduce Mr. Antrobus to you in

"I suspect the balance is quite on the other side; but I'd not care for debt if I'd such a wife as you, ma'am."

"How is your patient getting on?" asked Sugden.

"The cordials have greatly restored her," answered Lady Susan.

"Does she know whose hands she is in?" enquired Fitzgerald.

"Yes, I told her."

"What did she say?"

"Thanked God, and said she was sure His finger was in it. She then asked me if I were your wife, and when I replied that I was, she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed fervently—

"'I'm glad of it! I'm glad of it! He deserves such a one. When I came to myself and saw you, ma'am, I thought I was in

paradise.' I was much surprised and affected at the emotion she displayed."

Here the doctor came in.

"What do you think of your patient?" asked Fitzgerald.

The doctor shook his head.

"She can't recover."

"I feared as much," cried Lady Susan.

"She may linger a week, or she may go off like the snuff of a candle," continued the doctor. "If she has anything to do she'd better do it at once. I'll send a nurse immediately," added he, going, "and see her again in the evening."

"A clergyman!" suggested Lady Susan.

"She must have one," cried Fitzgerald.

"Certainly," pursued Sugden.

"I'll speak to Mr. Smith," said the doctor. "I've directed the girl who is with her, and she seems a sharp one, to give her a spoonful of the cordial should she require it. Good morning."

"Suspend your curiosity, my dear," said

patiently for an explanation of what, I confess, surprises me."

"See what a good wife I have got, Antrobus," said Fitzgerald, smiling.

"We must prepare for business," cried Sugden, ringing the bell. "I foresee that Dobree's deposition will have to be taken, which, to prevent the intervention of strangers, I'll do myself. As I am in the commission of the peace for the county, it will be a perfectly legal document."

The waiter appearing he ordered pens, ink, and paper, with a Testament, to be taken to the sick woman's room.

Here Lady Susan's little maid came running down to say that the dying woman wished to see the Major immediately.

CHAPTER XXII.

Dobree who, on Fitzgerald's entrance, became fearfully agitated, motioned the little maid to quit the room. The latter obeyed, and Fitzgerald, seating himself by the bedside, said, in a soothing tone—

"I'm sorry to see you thus, Mrs. Dobree. Have you all you want now? is there anything more we can do for you?"

The wretched woman averted her face.

"Oh! don't speak so kindly to me," she exclaimed, "or you'll drive me mad! Curses would be more welcome from Herbert Fitzgerald."

He took her attenuated hand in spite of her struggles.

"You can't forgive me when I tell you what I have been accessory to, nor can I forgive myself, or expect God to forgive me, all merciful as He is. I half resolved, when I last saw you, to tell you all. Ah! would that I had. What misery I should have spared myself."

"I repeat," said Fitzgerald, much moved, "I freely forgive any wrong you may have done me on condition that you instantly make me every reparation in your power."

"I will do so," exclaimed she, half rising, but again sinking back on her pillow. "God is my witness I came over here on purpose to do so. I should have got this grievous burden off my mind long ago but for fear of injuring him."

"If you mean Alfred," said Fitzgerald, "I promise, whatever the nature of your commu-

nication may be, the consequences shall fall as lightly on him as my duty to my own family will allow."

"Enough!" rejoined the poor woman, more composed. "Now you have promised me this I will no longer delay what I have to tell you. I shall die more contentedly now I know you will be merciful to your brother, whom I should be sorry to harm more than I can help, though latterly he has utterly neglected me. But that's all over now; I shall soon want nothing this world can give me. To begin—"

"Stop!" interrupted Fitzgerald. "Is what you are going to say legally necessary to do me justice?"

"I fear it is," replied the sufferer, after a pause. "I never thought of that. You'd never get justice without it."

"Then I'll call my friend, Mr. Sugden, who is a magistrate, to take it down."

Dobree at first strongly objected to this, declaring that she would make no disclosures

sory to, she consented on condition that Sugden should be placed where he could not see her. This being done, Fitzgerald administered the oath to her, and she, having recruited her exhausted strength with the cordial, thus began—

"I had the misfortune to lose my first husband and my baby soon after the birth of the latter, and Dr. Leatham engaged me to nurse the child of which Lady Fitzgerald, who had also lost her husband, expected daily to be delivered. Accordingly I went to Copton Hall to be in readiness for her ladyship's confinement. My lady, whom it was not very easy to please, took a great fancy to me, most unfortunately, as it afterwards turned out. She kept me constantly with her, so that I discovered what she succeeded in concealing from others, namely,

that she took the death of her husband, who had been killed by a large branch of an oak tree falling on his head, most dreadfully to heart. My lady was a very strong woman, as well as a very high spirited one, and she couldn't even bear that any one should think her capable of the least weakness, and I do believe she would have endured twenty times the agony she felt rather than the world should suspect it. She couldn't even bear that I, whom she saw had discovered her secret, should make the least allusion to it, so I forebore doing so, and never afterwards mentioned it. It is, however, necessary you should know how deeply your mother felt your father's death, as it will account for the very strong dislike, or rather hatred, which from your birth she always felt for you, at least so long as I remained with her.

"Well, my lady's pains came on, and Dr. Leatham was sent for. Young Mr. Macdonald, from Keswick, who attended the servants, was ordered to be in readiness to

had twins, which of course none of us could have expected. Now there was nobody in the bedroom at the time of my lady's accouchement," continued Dobree, "but myself and Mr. Macdonald.

"'Here's a fine boy for you, Mrs. Singleton,' said he (that was my name then), putting the first child that was born into my arms, 'but he has a curious mark over the left breast, as you see.' 'I do,' said I, 'I declare it's an oak tree.'"

Fitzgerald was about to speak, but Sugden signed to him to be silent, and Dobree went on.

"'This child must have been marked with this oak tree,' proceeded Mr. Macdonald, 'the moment my lady heard of her husband's death. Such phenomena do sometimes occur, and in the present instance we can clearly account

for it. I must make a memorandum of this the moment I get home, and you must also be prepared to speak to the fact, Mrs. Singleton, for I expect another child to be born presently, which may be a boy, too.' "

"You are sure it was the first child born that was marked in the way you mention?" asked Sugden.

"I am," replied the dying woman, solemnly. "As there's a just God above, who now hears me, into whose presence I must so soon be summoned, it was the elder twin who bore the oak tree, and there he stands!"

"I think you have such mark," said Sugden.

"Certainly!" replied Fitzgerald, showing it.

"Yes! that's it!" shrieked the *ci-devant* Singleton, straining her glassy eyes. "How well I remember it!"

"And did Mr. Macdonald make the memorandum he told you he would?" asked Sugden.

it with my own eyes. We agreed it would be best to say nothing about the child's having this mark to anybody but my lady, and we never did."

"Is this Mr. Macdonald still living at Keswick?" enquired Sugden.

"No! he's dead," replied Mrs. Dobree, "but he was buried there. Sir Alfred Fitzgerald told me so when I was last in England. But to make sure Macdonald was dead, I enquired at the India House."

"Why at the India House?" asked Fitzgerald.

"You'll see," rejoined the dying woman. "As soon as my lady was able, she asked to see the children, so I took the eldest twin to her—yourself, Herbert Fitzgerald. 'Here my lady,' said I; 'here's the little baronet for you. Isn't he a beauty?' 'What's this?'

said she, pointing to the oak tree, and then she pressed her lips tightly together, as she always did, when anything powerfully affected her, for fear any words might escape her. 'Macdonald ought to have strangled that monster,' she said, at length, turning away her head; 'never let me see it again!' nor did she if she could help it."

"Of course the other child became the favourite?" said Sugden.

"It did," resumed Dobree. "My lady adored it, she idolized Alfred as much as she detested Herbert, and I—I, God forgive me, wicked sinner that I am, encouraged my lady in this cruel and unnatural behaviour, to curry favor with her, and then angry with myself for doing this, I vented all my spleen upon you—you Herbert Fitzgerald—the innocent cause, until at length I began to hate you quite as much as my lady herself did."

Singleton became exhausted, and paused for a short time, but again proceeded.

"But the worst is to come. Would I could

Your brother was in his cradle by her side."

"'Singleton!' said she, gazing at the infant; 'Is he not beautiful?'

"I replied with truth, that he was most beautiful.

"'He'll make a noble baronet,' proceeded she.

"I stared.

"'I say he'll make a noble baronet, Singleton!' repeated she, fixing her large black eyes upon me.

"'How can that be, my lady?' asked I. 'He can never be the baronet while his elder brother lives.'

"'Are you mad, Singleton?' said she, slipping a Bank of England note of considerable value into my hand. 'He is the elder brother, and you know it?'

"'To be sure I do!' cried I, understanding

her, and pocketing the note. 'How could I talk such nonsense. As your ladyship says, Master Alfred is the elder brother, and I'd take my oath of it in any court in England. The question is whether Mr. Macdonald would do so too?'

"'Oh! you must manage him,' rejoined my lady.

"'I fear he's not to be managed, my lady?' said I.

"'Tut!' cried she, 'every man has his price; ascertain Macdonald's, and he shall have it.'

"'Best not trust him at all, my lady,' said I; 'I know Mr. Macdonald better than your ladyship, and I'm sure he'll never come into it.'

"'In that case,' replied my lady, 'I must get rid of him,' which she did. She got him a surgeon's berth in the East Indies, as a reward, as she told him, for the skill and attention he had shown; and Macdonald, who was poor, and getting on but indifferently at

burden's off my mind."

Dobree sank into a dose, and calling in Lady Susan's little maid the gentlemen left the room, and descended to join her ladyship and Mr. Antrobus, who met them at the door with anxious faces.

"I can't answer any questions now," said Fitzgerald, much agitated. "Let us go into the open air."

And taking Sugden's arm, they walked upon the ramparts. They remained silent for some time, until at length Fitzgerald said with a deep sigh—

"I suppose this wretched woman's statement may be depended on?"

"Unquestionably," replied Sugden. "She could have no motive for fabricating it, and to confess the truth she has told us no more than I expected to hear. Your brother's

conduct towards you, since your mother's death, is now quite intelligible. I have no doubt whatever she disclosed the imposture to him on her deathbed, and enjoined him to make that reparation which neither his embarrassments nor his inclination permitted him to do."

"Yet how gladly would I have made every sacrifice in my power to relieve Alfred," said Fitzgerald.

"He could not be sure of that," rejoined Sugden; "most men of the world, under similar circumstances, would have acted as your brother has. But we must not let the grass grow under our feet now we know our position. We must lose no time in making this memorandum of Macdonald's forthcoming, without which our case is incomplete."

"How can we do this?"

"Be that my business," replied Sugden. "My first step must be to find out who has possession of Macdonald's papers. I'll start for the north instantly."

us return. There's no time to lose, and I must write to Maud."

At the door of the hotel they encountered Mr. Antrobus.

"My dear friend," cried Fitzgerald, seizing his hand, "I can only say now in general terms that you have rendered me most essential service in bringing over Mrs. Dobree, and I thank you for it from the very bottom of my heart."

"And I rejoice from the very bottom of mine, my dear Major," returned the Irishman, "that I've been of the slightest service to you. You'll not be wanting me any more, Mr. Sugden?"

"No; not as relates to Dobree."

"Then I hope you'll not take it disrespectful, dear Major, if I set off for Holyhead im-

mediately, for I'm very anxious to see my poor mother, who is far from well."

"God forbid I should detain you for a moment under such circumstances," replied Fitzgerald.

"We will travel together then," said Sugden; "I'm going north, too."

"Well, to be sure now, that's lucky," exclaimed the Hibernian, rubbing his hands. "It's pleasant to have somebody to talk to who will talk, which is not always the case in England, you know. Sure, I once travelled with a man from Kingston to Piccadilly who never spoke but once during the whole journey, and that was in his sleep."

When his friends were gone, Fitzgerald's mind reverted with double force to the revelations of Dobree. In spite of the splendid position these opened to him, his pure and lofty spirit was deeply wounded at finding that those who by nature were most entitled to his love and respect had proved wholly unworthy of either. He felt hurt and humiliated

proud of belonging. All these considerations combined so disquieted Fitzgerald that, unable to control his feelings, he actually groaned aloud.

Lady Susan, who had been a silent observer of this mental conflict, arose, and flinging her arms around her husband's neck, exclaimed—

"Though ignorant of the cause, I fully sympathise in your distress; but however great this is, recollect you still possess me."

"You are right," said her husband, straining her to his bosom. "With such a treasure as you I ought to ask nothing. Why should I grieve for what it is impossible to remedy. The sins of others be on their own heads. There! there goes my weakness," continued he. "'Tis nothing; but tell me how Dobree is going on, dearest."

"She was dying when I last saw her," re-

joined Lady Susan. "The nurse, who came while you were out, is now with her. She is certainly much worse since she landed, and—"

Here the nurse came in the room, saying—

"The lady's awake, ma'am, and wishes to see you. She is in a very desponding way, and complains of her chest."

"Let us go to her," said Lady Susan.

Fitzgerald took up the Bible that lay on the table, and turned to the Psalms. His eyes had just fallen upon the words, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee," when Mr. Smith, the clergyman, was announced.

"Well employed, sir," observed the latter, shaking Fitzgerald by the hand; "those who seek comfort there will be sure to find it. Can I see the sick lady?"

"Be seated," said Fitzgerald, and ringing he told the little maid to let her mistress know that Mr. Smith had arrived.

"This poor woman," continued he, "was formerly a servant of my mother's. She has

merciful, and will forgive her; an assurance comforting alike to those who give it, and those who receive it."

Here the little maid returning, requested Mr. Smith to walk up. In about an hour he returned.

"The poor woman," said he, "in spite of all I could urge, continues to despair. I will see her again to-morrow, when I hope to find her in a better frame of mind. Good morning."

From this period a rapid change took place in Dobree, and it became evident that the close of her sinful career was fast approaching. When the surgeon called in the evening she was suffering acutely from spasms, and her mind wandered.

"I have administered opiates," said the surgeon, "which is all that can be done. If she fancies anything let her have it. I'll see her again in the morning, unless—"

"You think it probable she may go off in the night?" said Fitzgerald.

"You must not be surprised. Good-night."

At midnight the poor sufferer remained much in the same state, and Lady Susan, enjoining the nurse to call her should it be necessary, retired. About two o'clock the nurse knocked at her door, and informed her that a change had taken place, upon which Fitzgerald and Lady Susan instantly repaired to Dobree's room. They found her supported by pillows, her hollow eyes nearly protruding from their sockets, while the perspiration stood in large drops upon her forehead.

"Mercy! mercy!" shrieked the poor, dying wretch. "Indeed, indeed, my lady, I couldn't help it. I didn't mean to betray you; I swear by all that's sacred I did not, Alfred! Don't let them throw me into that dreadful pit. My lady, my lady—"

In a few minutes her earthly troubles were over.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FITZGERALD, forgetting everything but Mrs. Dobree's having been an old servant in the family, followed her to the grave, and on his return from what he considered his duty, he found the following letter from Sugden on his table:—

"Penrith, Tuesday.

"MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

"Just arrived. I parted with Antrobus at Shrewsbury, and came here direct, where I am located at Denbigh's, a cousin of Maud's, who received me with open arms, and insisted on my making his house my home, in return for which I shall have to

ask him and his wife and a couple of brats to Hampshire, where, in conjunction with 'Master Herbert,' we shall have fine squalling. I forced on Antrobus the money he had expended on Mrs. Dobree, which I shall place to a certain 'baronet's' account. The warm-hearted, wrong-headed 'broth of a boy,' was very loth to take the 'filthy lucre,' and explained the nature of the obligation you had laid him under, but I told him he had better do the right thing for once, by way of novelty, so he laughed and pocketed the insult.

"I travelled from Lancaster with an attorney, from whom I gleaned that Macdonald had left all his property, papers, &c., to a maiden sister, who resides in this place. This fortunately precludes the necessity for my going to Keswick, where I should have encountered Billing, which, considering my business, would have been awkward. I find Macdonald died suddenly, under somewhat singular circumstances, into which I shall make it my business to enquire.

that she is very good natured, but a violent Radical, with a keen eye to the main chance, as most Radicals have. Of course she will find me a violent Radical. I must summon all my forensic eloquence to my aid.

"*Wednesday*—I'm hand in glove with Miss Macdonald. We are great allies. I only wish you had heard me last night! I haven't belonged to a first rate debating society for nothing, I promise you. I almost rivalled that splendid debater, John Adolphus! I demolished Pitt in a twinkling. I denounced Castlereagh as a renegade, and Wellington as a fortunate blunderer. On the other hand I exalted Charles Fox and Sheridan into demi-gods, and Horne Tooke into a Socrates! Denbigh, who is a staunch Tory, stared at finding he had harboured such a monster; but at last seeing I was roasting the old tabby,

he began to enjoy the joke. As for the lady herself, she was ready to fly into my arms, though she would have proved as difficult to enclose as Hampstead Heath, as she is prodigiously fat. She no sooner discovered that I had given up practice and took no fees than she became very anxious to have my opinion of an old deed, by which she conceives she is entitled to some considerable property in Whitehaven, though Messrs. Billing and Co. have assured her she has not a leg to stand on, of which opinion I take quite another view, looking at her understandings, of course. I told Miss Macdonald I should be very happy to be of any service to her in the matter, and went to her house for that purpose the moment I had breakfasted this morning.

"'Well, what do you think of it?' enquired the lady, anxiously, when I had read over the deed.

"'Why, it's impossible to give any opinion upon it,' replied I, 'until I've seen the settle-

but here are all my poor brother's parchments and papers,' continued she, opening an old *escritoire*,' if it's not giving you too much trouble, Mr. Sugden, perhaps you would examine them.'

"'With pleasure," cried I.

"But after routing out drawer and pigeon holes innumerable, I was unable to light upon the document in question, or, what was of infinitely more importance, without finding the memorandum book I had come so far to obtain a sight of.

"I was on the point of giving up the search as hopeless, when a small drawer in one corner, which I had not deemed it worth while to examine caught my eye.

"'Oh! you needn't look in *that*,' exclaimed Miss Macdonald, 'the settlement can't be there.'

"'No, of course it can't,' cried I, 'but we may as well see what's in it, you know. This drawer may contain something that will give us a clue.' So I opened it, when to my great joy a small red book with a clasp and pencil attached, presented itself to my eager eyes.

"My brother's memorandum book,' exclaimed Miss Macdonald, seizing it. 'I couldn't think what in the world I had done with it. I suppose there will not be the slightest use in looking through it?'

"' As you please,' said I, carelessly, though I was all anxiety to clutch it.

"' I will put it back then,' said she.

"' Perhaps we may as well go over it?' said I. 'Who knows but it may tell us, after all, where to find the settlement?'

"' Very true,' replied she, 'so it may,' and she gave me the memorandum book.

"Fortunately at that moment, Miss Macdonald was called out of the room, which afforded me the opportunity of going through

beginning to end, I couldn't find the least trace of that particular mem. which Dobree had named.

"'This is very odd,' thought I, 'for that Macdonald did make such a memorandum, I can't for a moment doubt,' so I began examining the memoranda again, still more carefully, if possible, than I had done before. The result of this second scrutiny was important.

"At the bottom of the twelfth page stood the following entry—

"'Mem. I hold myself in readiness to go to Copton Hall, at a moment's notice. Her ladyship, in all probability, will be confined to-night. Hope Leatham will be in time—rather nervous about the affair.'

"And, at the top of the next page, the subjoined occurred—

ask him and his wife and a couple of brats to Hampshire, where, in conjunction with 'Master Herbert,' we shall have fine squalling. I forced on Antrobus the money he had expended on Mrs. Dobree, which I shall place to a certain 'baronet's' account. The warm-hearted, wrong-headed 'broth of a boy,' was very loth to take the 'filthy lucre,' and explained the nature of the obligation you had laid him under, but I told him he had better do the right thing for once, by way of novelty, so he laughed and pocketed the insult.

"I travelled from Lancaster with an attorney, from whom I gleaned that Macdonald had left all his property, papers, &c., to a maiden sister, who resides in this place. This fortunately precludes the necessity for my going to Keswick, where I should have encountered Billing, which, considering my business, would ve been awkward. I find Macdonald died nly, under somewhat singular circum- o which I shall make it my busi- re.

" ' I suppose he always carried it about him,' said I.

" ' Oh ! dear, no,' replied Miss Macdonald, ' it was left sealed up with the rest of his books and papers, in charge of Messrs. Billing and Holmes, all the time he was in India.'

" ' Then, how came your brother to have it about him when—'

" ' Well, that I can't say,' interrupted Miss Macdonald, ' we were then living at Keswick. My brother had been passing a week in Glasgow, with a very old friend, and, on his return, found the box containing his papers, which had come from Messrs. Billing and Co., during his absence. I quite remember his opening it, and taking out the memorandum book. He eagerly glanced into it, and exclaimed, ' Thought so ! I knew I was right !' and, putting the book into his pocket,

he set off immediately for Copton Hall, from which he never returned alive!'

"'When was that?'

"'Oh! not long after my lady's death. When Sir Alfred Fitzgerald was staying there.'

"'Have you any idea to what the words —'Thought so—knew I was right'—referred?'

"'Not the slightest,' replied Miss Macdonald, 'nor can I form any conjecture. It remains quite a mystery.'

"'I suppose the same housekeeper is at the Hall?' said I.

"'Yes.'

"'What is her name?'

"'Bonsor. She has care of Copton Hall. But it's no use your going there. She has strict orders from Sir Alfred not to admit any one.'

"'There can be no harm in trying,' said I, taking up my hat. 'I'm told Copton Hall is one of the finest old baronial residences in

add that I intend going to Copton Hall to-morrow, to try if I can learn anything from Mrs. Bonsor that can throw any light on the abstraction of the memorandum, for that it has been abstracted I am thoroughly convinced. Love to Lady Susan.

"Yours in haste,

"C. SUGDEN.

"P.S.—I suppose it's all over with Singleton that was. May God be merciful to her."

CHAPTER XXIV.

FITZGERALD had just posted a letter to Wilson, informing her of Dobree's unexpected arrival and death, when he received a second communication from Sugden which, as the reader will see, was as little calculated to lessen Fitzgerald's natural anxiety at the uncertainty of his position as his friend's first letter had been—

"Penrith.

"MY DEAR FITZGERALD,

"I am just returned from Copton Hall. What a magnificent old place! If anything could elevate our natures surely being born and bred in such a paradise would do it.

I found she had no objection to talk. Like most females living secluded, she eagerly seized the opportunity of indulging in a little gossip, and I had no difficulty whatever in gleaning from her all she had to communicate. I told her Miss Macdonald had warned me that I should have my ride for my pains, and the mention of this lady led Bonsor at once to advert to the untimely end of her brother.

"'I remember Mr. Macdonald's coming up to the Hall that morning,' continued Bonsor, 'as well as if it were but yesterday.'

"'Had he been up here before?' I enquired.

"'Yes, once,' she replied, 'about a week before, when he came up to see me and any of the old servants he had physicked formerly. Sir Alfred had a fainting fit while Mr. Macdonald was here, so Booth called him in.'

"'Then his second visit to Sir Alfred was professional?' I remarked.

"'No such thing. Another doctor attended Sir Alfred. Mr. Macdonald was only called in because he happened to be in the Hall when the fit came on."

"'I see; Mr. Macdonald's visit was to you then?'

"'Wrong again. Macdonald came up the second time to see Sir Alfred.'

"'But you say Dr. ——— attended him.'

"'Certainly; Macdonald had other business with Sir Alfred, though what that was nobody ever heard. Sir Alfred was hard pressed on this point at the inquest, but he refused to answer any questions, on the plea that Mr. Macdonald's business related solely to Sir Alfred's private affairs, and concerned nobody else, and the coroner decided the baronet was right.'

"'And so he was.'

"'We were all very much disappointed though,' pursued Bonsor, 'for this business, whatever it was, caused poor Mr. Macdonald's death. Booth, who had gone up into the

so that I wanted him to let the groom drive him back to Keswick in the pony carriage. But he swore, for he was very passionate and self-willed, that rather than be beholden to such a scoundrel (meaning Sir Alfred) he'd crawl home on his hands and knees.'

"'Scoundrel was a very strong expression to have used,' said I.

"'It was, sir,' rejoined Bonsor, 'but Mr. Macdonald would have said the same of a king, if he had offended him. He then enquired for the address of Major Fitzgerald, Sir Alfred's brother, which I gave him, and he left me. About an hour after, the head keeper came running up to say that he had found Mr. Macdonald dead in the hollow way, just above the bridge, sir.'

"'What was the immediate cause of Macdonald's death?' I asked.

"'Oh! affection of the heart, sir,' replied Bonsor; 'there can be no doubt about that. Sir Alfred, who was just going to dinner when the keeper brought the news, immediately got up from table, and went down with the servants, and fetched the body up to The Hall here, when Booth took charge of it until the doctor arrived.'

"'I suppose Macdonald hadn't much property about him?' said I, carelessly.

"'Oh! dear no,' pursued Bonsor. 'Booth, who searched the body, found nothing upon it but his watch, key, purse, and an old memorandum book, which he gave up to the coroner.'

"This was all Bonsor had to tell me.

"Now, reasoning on probabilities, I am inclined to think that the abstracted leaf was in the memorandum book when Macdonald went up to the Castle, and that it was essential to his business there; for, bear in mind, Macdonald had attended your brother in a *fainting fit*, when his neck being necessarily

he had made, that he was right, he might have hurried up to Copton Hall to inform your brother of the fact, as a man, so straightforward and conscientious as the surgeon, would naturally have done. His subsequent excitement might have been caused, either by your brother's refusing to credit him, or by trying to propitiate him; the latter probably. Still, assuming my hypothesis be correct, when and by whom could the memorandum have been extracted? Booth seems to be the only one capable of elucidating this all important point, and I shall return to town instantly and ferret him out. I daresay Wilson knows his address. In the meantime, keep up Lady Susan's spirits. I will not sleep till I have found Booth.

"Sincerely yours,

"C. SUGDEN."

Fitzgerald's situation was at this time extremely critical. The "Magnificent" had arrived, and only waited for a fair wind to sail; while the prospect of Sugden being able to make the lost memorandum forthcoming, seemed less likely than ever. Fitzgerald saw that unless he was in a position to claim his birthright, he could have no hope of ever obtaining it, and that if he lost his passage, he should forfeit his appointment—a serious consideration in the present state of his affairs. In the meantime, his expenses at the hotel were considerable.

This perplexing state of things had weighed heavily on Fitzgerald's mind for several days, and the morning after receiving Mr. Sugden's letter, he was so ill that he was unable to rise. Lady Susan, who had witnessed his disquietude, without the power of alleviating it, from ignorance of its cause, grew alarmed. Her experience told her that her husband would in all probability be worse before he

that a physician was summoned, who, without hesitation, declared Fitzgerald to be in considerable danger; nor was the anguish Lady Susan felt at this announcement lessened when she learnt from Jackson that the Captain of the "Magnificent" had sent to say they must all be on board immediately. This, of course, was out of the question; so the vessel sailed without them.

In this trying situation, Lady Susan sought by prayer and the sedulous discharge of her duties, to lull the agony which tore her heart, and both the little maid and Jackson seconded her in this.

"Never fear, my lady," cried the latter, whose distress was scarcely less than her own, "sure we'll bring the master through it; I've tended him in a worse strait. It's

surprising how that little maid works! I'll never call her consated again. But here's a letter for the Major."

Lady Susan opened it; it was from Sugden, dated London.

"I arrived here last night," wrote Sugden, "and was directed by Wilson to Booth's lodgings. I found his wife in great grief; Booth, who had gone to the North to see your brother, had written to her to say he was laid up in some town, the name of which she could not make out, as the postmark was wholly illegible, and the wafer had obliterated all but the termination, which was *ham*—probably Birmingham or Nottingham. I shall set out for the former immediately."

This letter, which gave no intelligible information, only served to increase Lady Susan's distress, anxious as she was to see Sugden.

However, bad as things were, they rapidly

surprise, for her experience had taught her the painful truth. Throwing herself on her knees, she prayed that God would, yet, enable her to bear the trial. She then resumed her seat by the bedside of the unconscious sufferer, whose parched lips she moistened, from time to time, with a wet sponge, as he lay flushed and motionless, giving no signs of life, beyond muttering a few unintelligible sounds. But even these grew gradually fainter and fainter, and, at length, ceased altogether.

Lady Susan listened, breathlessly. Now she would have given worlds to have heard those mutterings, which, but a minute before, had struck like a knell upon her ear. But she listened in vain. Her husband's eyes closed—all was silent as the grave. Could this be the stillness of death? She feared so!

The little maid entered on tip-toe. But, finding she could not gain the attention of her mistress, who continued, with her head bent down over the bed, listening, she went to the door, and returned with Sugden. Travel-stained and exhausted, he had just arrived from a fruitless search after Booth, and been directed, at the hotel, to the lodgings of his dying friend. Horror-struck at the scene, he stood staring at the husband and wife, scarcely able to believe that he saw the strong, stalwart man, whom, only a fortnight before, he had left in perfect health. Just then Lady Susan heaved a deep sigh, turned to Sugden with a face so full of woe, that, unable to control his feelings, he walked to the window, and sobbed audibly. This, fortunately, proved contagious, and Lady Susan, whose brain began to whirl, was instantaneously r lieved by a copious burst of tears.

The surgeon, at this juncture, entered the room. He looked at Fitzgerald, listened, felt his heart, listened again attentively, for some

"Thank God!" exclaimed Lady Susan.

"Control yourself, my dear lady," rejoined the surgeon. "This is a favourable symptom, doubtless; but we must not be too sanguine; you want rest," continued he, looking at his watch; "go and lie down, and, in the meantime, I will take charge of the patient myself."

Sugden returned to the hotel. When he came back, he found Lady Susan, greatly refreshed, again at her post.

"He still sleeps," she whispered, "his breathing is stronger, and more regular, and his pulse lower; the surgeon says that if he continues to go on favourably for four-and-twenty hours longer," she added, joyfully, "his recovery will be almost certain!"

Fitzgerald did continue improving, and the surgeon's prognostication was fulfilled.

The invalid regained his strength almost as rapidly as he had lost it, and, in another week, was able to be removed to Sugden's residence, in another part of Hampshire, which, under all circumstances, it was deemed desirable he should all do.

"I little thought," said Mrs. Sugden, as she received them in the hall of the fine old Elizabethan mansion—"I little thought, when we parted in London, that we should meet again so soon. But all's well that ends well. I'm no longer a widow bewitched, and I will answer for it, your cheeks will be as red as a dairymaid's, in another week, my dear Major. But you've had a severe attack."

"Fortune of war, my dear Mrs. Sugden," cried Fitzgerald, gaily. "I've regained my health and lost my appointment. I can say with Jaffier, 'I am not worth a ducat.'"

"But you've a wife, who is worth her weight in ducats."

"I have," said Fitzgerald, "thank God! for giving me such a treasure!" and he looked

"the former is still to come."

"Heaven grant it prove so," rejoined her husband, "for I'm sure you deserve it. Never was there so capital, so skilful, so patient a nurse!"

"Still sickness is not altogether agreeable under the most favourable circumstances," said Sugden, with a smile. "What a glorious thing it would be if we could be born old, and get our gout, rheumatism, and fevers over in the nursery."

"Where's Master Herbert?" enquired Lady Susan.

"At the further end of the building, fortunately," replied his mother, "or you would be sure to hear him. Let me show you to your room, Major."

"I hope it's not haunted," said Fitzgerald, "for of course you have your traditional ghost."

"If the house is haunted," cried Sugden, "it is the by rats. I hear them racing up and down the walls at a fine rate sometimes."

"You should commit those disturbers of the peace, Mr. Magistrate."

"I will, and you too if you're not on your best behaviour. This way!"

"I can't think what that fellow Booth has done with himself," cried Sugden, as he and Fitzgerald sat together in the library a day or two after. "I could hear nothing of him either at Birmingham or Nottingham, and we are at a dead lock without him."

"Do you think he knows anything of the memorandum book?" asked Fitzgerald.

"If he does not I don't know who does. I told his wife as I returned through London to send him on to Portsmouth the moment he turned up, and left money with her for his expenses in travelling, and—"

"My dear," said Lady Susan, coming in at the moment, "here's Booth."

I've found you and the Major at last, sir. I have had a pretty hunt after you, and was afraid I shouldn't find you after all."

"I suppose I must go?" said Lady Susan, with a smile.

"I fear you must," said her husband.

"What have you done with yourself, Booth?" said Sugden, when Lady Susan had left the library. "I heard you had gone North, and—"

"I returned by sea, sir," replied Booth, "and was laid up with lumbago on my way from Bristol, at Chippenham. I only got to London yesterday, and to Portsmouth last night, and set off for your place here at daybreak. But what is your business with me, Mr. Sugden?"

"Simply to know whether you can assist

us in coming at a memorandum which has been extracted from the note book you found on the body of Macdonald, and delivered up with his watch and the rest of his property to the coroner."

"Before I answer that question, I must be sure it won't get me into trouble," said Booth.

"I pledge you my honour it shall not," cried Fitzgerald. "Whatever communication you may think proper to make shall be held sacred."

"What do *you* say to that, Mr. Sugden?" enquired Booth, anxiously.

"Certainly. We shall consider what you say as quite confidential."

"So far, so good, gentlemen," said Booth. "But there's another point to be settled; and it is best for all parties that we should come to a proper understanding. You know I'm a poor man, gentlemen, a very poor man—I've a wife and child, and—"

"Well, assist us in this matter," interrupted

"Enough!" rejoined Booth. "It's a bargain. I'm quite satisfied, gentlemen. But before I begin," continued he, after some hesitation, "it is but right to apprise you, Major Fitzgerald, that I shall have to say something that perhaps you had better hear from Mr. Sugden than me."

"In that case, then," said Fitzgerald, rising, "I'll leave you together."

"Yes, do," observed Sugden, and Fitzgerald left the library.

"To begin at the beginning," said Booth, obviously relieved by Fitzgerald's absence, "Mr. Macdonald came up to the Hall, the day he died, to see Sir Alfred, and though I did not know what his business with him was then, I can guess it now. They got to high words together, and soon after Mr. Macdonald left. I went in to show Sir Alfred a box of

perfumes, which had just arrived from London. But not seeing him in his sitting-room, I was going into his bed-chamber, which opened out of it, when I heard footsteps on the stairs that went down into the garden. I looked out of the window to see if it was Sir Alfred, when to my very great surprise, I perceived a man in a countryman's frock, with a straw hat on, come out of the turret, and dart like lightning into the elm-tree walk that led into the wood. 'This must be a thief,' thought I, and in the impulse of the moment, I rushed down stairs, through the elm-tree walk into the woods after him. He was some distance ahead; but I caught sight of him among the bushes, and managed to keep in view, though I couldn't gain upon him, he went so fast. Well, presently he looked back, and I saw his face quite plain, though he couldn't see me, as I happened at that moment to be behind a thick holly bush, and who do you think it was, sir? Why, Sir Alfred himself."

will see; and as for the frock, he had worn it once in a frolic."

"Go on."

"Well, the pace Sir Alfred went at," pursued Booth, "soon brought us to where the wood overhangs the hollow way leading down to the bridge. Here he laid himself down flat on the ground, and creeping to the edge of the cliff, peeped cautiously through the bushes into the road below. Presently he started up again, and disappeared down a narrow winding gully through the rocks, when I immediately took his place. From this I could see Mr. Macdonald coming slowly along the road, as if he walked with difficulty, while the baronet stood crouching behind a huge boulder, right under the place from where I was peeping. He had a pistol in his hand!"

"A pistol!" echoed the lawyer.

"A pistol, as I hope to be saved," said Booth, wiping the perspiration from his brow, "I saw it as plainly as I now see you, Mr. Sugden. Well, just as Mr. Macdonald got close, Sir Alfred cocked the pistol, and was in the act of raising it, when Mr. Macdonald staggered, and fell to the ground, a dead man. I cannot tell you what I suffered at that moment; nevertheless I kept my eyes about me."

"Then the pistol was not discharged," said Mr. Sugden, much relieved.

"No! thank God. Sir Alfred was spared that crime," replied Booth. "Mr. Macdonald died of a heart complaint to which he had been subject. Sir Alfred, who was evidently much surprised, as well he might be, stood quite uncertain how to act; however, he almost instantly recovered his presence of mind, and, putting up the pistol, ran to the corpse, pulled a memorandum book from one of the pockets, tore out a leaf, replaced the

his breath, than he tore the leaf which he had abstracted from the memorandum book, and which he had kept crumpled up in his hand, into very small pieces, and throwing them among the bushes, set off again for the Hall, as fast as he could. Well, the moment he was out of sight, I went down to the body, and felt the heart, but life was evidently extinct. Mr. Macdonald was beyond all mortal aid, and as my giving the alarm could do no good, and might draw down Sir Alfred's suspicions on myself, I went up into the wood, with the intention of returning to the Hall, lest my absence should be discovered. On my way, I came upon the fragments of the paper which the baronet had torn up, and wondering what it could have contained to induce him to venture so much to gain possession of it, I carefully collected all the pieces,

with the intention of putting them together again the first opportunity, and got back to Copton Hall without my absence having been discovered."

"And the memorandum? the memorandum?" exclaimed Sugden, eagerly.

"Here it is!" cried Booth, producing it, "just as I pasted it together again—read it, you'll find it complete, sir, not a word is missing. No wonder Sir Alfred went to such lengths to destroy it, Mr. Sugden."

"Huzza! Our case is complete," exclaimed the latter, when he had read the memorandum, which was as follows:—

"*March* 10.—*Important. Delivered Lady Fitzgerald of male twins, at half-past four o'clock, a.m., the elder twin marked with an oak-tree just above the left breast. I. Macdonald.*"

"I quite remember," continued Booth, "that when Mr. Macdonald bared Sir Alfred's bosom in that fainting fit, he exclaimed, 'Hallo! how's this?' or words to that effect,

He then administered the oath to Booth, and took down his deposition.

"You may now return to Town," said Sugden, "where you will receive a regular allowance for the present; but you must hold yourself in readiness to repeat what you have just sworn to before whatever tribunal considered necessary."

"I'd repeat it before a hundred tribunals," exclained Booth, indignantly. "Sir Alfred has treated me infamously! See here, sir," continued he, showing the bullet-hole in his hat. "It's not his fault, but the accident of my foot slipping, that he didn't blow my brains out."

CHAPTER XXV.

SUGDEN, for obvious reasons, spared Fitzgerald the details of Booth's disclosures, simply informing him that he had secured the memorandum, and considered his case complete.

"The next thing to be done," continued Sugden, "is to claim the immediate restitution of your rights, which you had better leave to me. Coming from a lawyer of my standing will give the claim more weight."

"Had I not better acquaint Susan with my position?" asked Fitzgerald.

"I think you had," replied Sugden, "your right is incontestable, and the misconduct of others reflects no discredit on you."

"My dear!" said he, seating himself, "I'm come to tell you a story."

"May not I hear it," asked Mrs Sugden.

"I think you may," rejoined Fitzgerald. "You are very discreet. Besides, all good little girls should hear it."

"And I'm a *very* good little girl, am I not?" said Mrs. Sugden.

"Well. I think I may answer for you," pursued Lady Susan, smiling, "so go on with your story, Herbert."

"Well, once upon a time—"

"The true orthodox beginning," said Mrs. Sugden.

"Don't interrupt him," said Lady Susan.

"I'm dumb," cried Mrs. Sugden.

"Go on, my dear."

"Well, once upon a time," began Fitzgerald again.

"You said that before, you know," interrupted Mrs. Sugden.

"I shall never get on at this rate," said Fitzgerald, laughing.

"Really, you are too bad, my dear Mrs. Sugden," cried Lady Susan. "Pray let him go on. Now, Herbert."

"Well, once on a time," reiterated Fitzgerald, "a great lady, who had lived in a grand house, was delivered of twins—male twins."

"That's right! Be correct," cried Mrs. Sugden.

"Pray!" said Lady Susan.

"Now, a certain wicked spirit," continued Fitzgerald, "put it into this great lady's head to pass off the younger of these twins for the elder, whereby the latter was deprived of his birth-right, and sent into the wide world to seek his fortune."

"Where he got more kicks than halfpence, I suppose," said Mrs. Sugden.

"Where he got both kicks and halfpence," pursued Fitzgerald, "though he lost most of

Mrs. Sugden, "that's the rule in all such stories, you know."

"It is to be hoped he *will* get his own, my dear Mrs. Sugden," replied Fitzgerald, seriously. "There's no reason on earth why he should not."

"And the name of the rightful heir?" enquired Lady Susan, turning very pale.

"Is Herbert Fitzgerald, my love," rejoined he, tenderly embracing her, "and now you know all."

"*A la bonne heure*!" cried Sugden, as Fitzgerald entered the library. "Sit down, and I'll read you what I have written to your brother. Listen attentively.

"'To Mr. Alfred Fitzgerald.

"'Sir,—

"'I herewith enclose a copy of a memorandum, made by the late John Mac-

donald, your mother's *accoucheur*, together with copies of depositions made, on oath, by George Booth, formerly in your service; and Sarah Dobree, *ci-devant* Singleton, lately deceased, who was, as you are, doubtless, aware, in your mother's confidence for years.

" ' Of your brother's being able to establish his claim to the title of Sir Herbert Fitzgerald, there can be no doubt; and he desires me to say that if you give no cause for litigation, he is willing, notwithstanding all that has passed, to make every thing as easy to you as possible, besides securing you a suitable maintenance.

" ' I have the honour to be, Sir,

" ' Your obedient Servant,

" ' CHARLES SUGDEN.'

" I'll just add a few lines," said Fitzgerald. Accordingly he wrote. " The above has my entire approbation. Accept the olive branch I tender.

" Affectionately, yours,

" HERBERT."

"In reply to your letter, which, I presume, is intended for me, I have simply to observe that the documents accompanying it are a tissue of falsehoods.

"Sir, I have the honour to be,

"Yours &c., &c.,

"ALFRED FITZGERALD, BART."

"To Charles Sugden, Esq."

"Well, you see we have no alternative," said Sugden. "I'll instruct my man of business to proceed at once, and bring the matter before the proper tribunal, with as little delay as possible. Let me see," continued he, seizing a pen, "we'll get the Attorney General to lead, with Torr and Jones as juniors—clear headed fellow Torr."

"Hold!" cried Fitzgerald, who was pacing the apartment. "Not quite so fast, if you

please, Sugden," continued he, seating himself. "I can't make up my mind to institute proceedings, until I have tried the effect of a personal interview with Alfred."

"A personal interview!" repeated Sugden, staring, "why you must be mad to dream of such a thing."

"I cannot bring myself to think so. I cannot believe my brother so lost to all sense of what is right and honourable as to persist in doing me injustice, especially as I am willing, not only to forget the past, but to provide for him handsomely for the future."

"What does a man in his wretched state of mind care for that?" said Sugden. "Such reasoning, and such concessions will be entirely thrown away upon such a misanthrope. It is highly dangerous to seek him in his lair. Booth narrowly escaped with life!"

"I am determined on this interview, nevertheless," replied Fitzgerald, firmly. "The invincible aversion I have to carry my claim into court, when everything must be

said Sugden, shrugging his shoulders. "Wilful man must have his way. But you must not go alone, and, unfortunately, I can't accompany you, having passed my word to preside at the Quarter Sessions. To go alone, in your brother's irritable state, might cost you your life."

"I don't intend to go alone; though I've no such apprehensions. I intend taking Booth with me."

"Booth!"

"Yes. He knows the locality, and can pilot me to the house in which my brother lives. Booth is no coward, and Alfred is not likely to offer violence to me, in his presence. Besides, we can say anything before Booth, which we could not do if I took Jackson, and I can't, very well, apply to Billing, who is my brother's agent in the matter."

"True. Billing, of course, could not interfere, unless called upon by your brother to do so. I believe, after all, Booth must be your Sancho Panza, though, I suspect, he'll have as little taste for the adventure as Sancho himself."

Lady Susan, at first, strongly objected to her husband going, but finding that he intended taking Booth, she saw him depart with tolerable composure. He travelled by the night coach, and, on his arrival in London, went straight to Booth's lodgings, deciding not to see Wilson until he returned.

Booth, who, as the reader may imagine, had no inclination to revisit Sir Alfred's residence, partly from a wholesome dread of his pistol, and partly because the double part he had played would be discovered, endeavoured to dissuade Fitzgerald from undertaking the expedition.

"I know what a state your brother is in, Sir Herbert," continued he, "better than you do. Depend upon it, he'll never give in,

Fitzgerald, in a tone not be disputed. "My resolution is taken. Will you accompany me?"

"Oh! certainly, Sir Herbert," said Booth, who felt that this question was tantamount to a command. "But I warn you, Sir Herbert, that you can't be too cautious. You must be on your guard."

"I mean to be so," rejoined Fitzgerald. "I'm too old a soldier to run unnecessary risks."

"I'm glad to hear that," said Booth. "When do we start?"

"Immediately, so get your kit ready, and as I wish to be as private as possible, drop all titles, and avoid Keswick, where you may be recognised."

"I understand."

Accordingly, when they arrived at Amble-

side, they took horses, and rode across by the bridle path, at Rydal Water, to Rosswaite. Here they discharged their jaded nags, and, hiring fresh ones, proceeded at once to the farm house in which Alfred Fitzgerald was living, and Booth was not sorry to see that the peasant, who accompanied them, to take charge of the cattle, was a tolerably stalwart man.

Fitzgerald's heart sank within him when he saw the wretched tenement his brother had voluntarily retired to. He had visited the spot once when he was a boy; and he well remembered exploring, with eager interest, the remarkable range of rocks in the vicinity.

By the advice of Booth, who grew more and more uneasy every instant, as if impressed by an instinctive foreboding of his impending fate, they halted behind a projecting rock, about fifty yards from the house. Leaving the horses to the care of the peasant, with orders to keep on the alert, in case his assistance should be necessary, Booth cautiously

They did so, but all was still. Not a sound could be heard. Fitzgerald then knocked with his whip, but nobody came. He knocked harder, but with no better success.

"Remain here," said Fitzgerald. "I'll go round to the front door."

"Beware of fire-arms," whispered Booth.

"Never fear," returned Fitzgerald. "The boldest policy is the best," and running up the half ruinous flight of steps, leading to the hall, he knocked again; still nobody came.

"Hallo! there," shouted Fitzgerald, knocking louder, and continuously. This availed; for an upper casement was thrown open, and Cranky Nell thrust forth her ugly face.

"Leave off that row, can't you," cried she, angrily, "and tell us what you want."

"Your master."

"Then you must seek him elsewhere,"

bawled Nell, "for he's not here," and she was going to close the casement, when Fitzgerald cried. "But I must see him. I've very particular business with him. I'm his brother."

"That's a lie!" roared Nell. "He hasn't got no brother. I never heard him mention none."

"But I say this gentleman *is* your master's brother," said Booth, showing himself.

"Oh! you're there, are you; you audacious villain?" screamed Nell. "It's like your imperence to show your brazen face here again. Egad! it's lucky for you, I can tell you, my fine fellow that Sir Alfred's out, or he'd make crow's meat of you in a twinkle, and serve you right too, for putting him into such a passion, and getting me blowed up sky high, just because you would come in, whether I'd let you or no. But you'll be hanged some day—that's a comfort; and I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you."

" I shan't ; and that's flat !" squalled Nell. " It's as much as my life is worth to let anybody in. Besides, Sir Alfred's not here. I told you so before; and it's a very great chance whether he comes home all night ; for it's going to rain dogs and cats, and he likes to be out in it. If you want him, you must seek him, and that's all I've got to say."

" And pray, where am I to seek him ?" asked Fitzgerald, calling her back.

" In the Eagle's Nest !" thundered Nell, closing the window.

" Is there such a place ?" enquired Fitzgerald, after a pause.

" There is," replied Booth. " I know it well, I clambered up into it three or four times, and it's just about the last place you ought to follow your brother into, Sir Herbert."

" Don't Sir Herbert me now," cried Fitz-

gerald, pettishly. "I must see my brother, and, by that beldame's account, his return home is quite uncertain."

"But you cannot see him in such a place as the Eagle's Nest. It's on the top of the highest rock, ever so much above those clouds there, and overhangs the lake. One false step, and you tumble fifteen hundred feet into Wast Water!"

"That is very provoking," said Fitzgerald, very much annoyed. "I don't like being foiled, and coming all this way to no purpose. Do you think you can find out this nest, Booth?"

The latter was silent.

"Come; I see you can, and you must," pursued Fitzgerald, in a tone not to be disobeyed. "We will ride as far as we can, and then you shall put me on the track. No scruples! I've determined not to return until I've seen my brother. It is absolutely requisite for my peace of mind. But as I've no wish—no right, indeed, to drag you into

assurance, nor was he without hope that Fitzgerald would spare himself the interview, for Booth considered it little short of madness to seek a man in such a frame of mind as he knew Sir Alfred was; in such a spot too.

A quarter of an hour's hard riding brought them to the foot of the stupendous range of rocks they proposed to scale, whence they ascended by a very rugged and dangerous road some five hundred feet above the plain. Here they were compelled to dismount and consign their horses again to the care of their attendant, for the road, bad as it was, went no farther. They then began to toil upward, the way becoming steeper and more difficult at every step. At length, a sudden turn brought them into a deep gully, or water-course, worn by the storms of ages; and in an instant they were enveloped in mist.

"Hard work, sir," said Booth, pausing to take breath.

"Rather," said Fitzgerald, wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"The worst's to come yet, sir, better turn back—better return while we're well. No saying what a desperate man may do."

"Forward!" cried Fitzgerald.

In a few minutes they passed through a cleft on the rock, the top of which formed a natural bridge over the deep ravine they stood in.

"Now comes the tug," said Booth looking up. "We must climb here, for the other side is as steep as the roof of a house, and we must creep over the bridge, which isn't wider than a dog's back, before we can get to the peak above, the top of which is our mark —better turn back, sir."

Fitzgerald's only answer was seizing a projecting point and springing up the almost perpendicular face of the cliff with an agility and a confidence which early practice alone

panion at the risk of both their lives. A few minutes more enabled them to reach the narrow ridge, surmounting the arch, which by keeping their eyes steadily fixed on a large stone opposite they succeeded in crossing in safety, when they found themselves on a small table land about eighty feet below the summit.

The storm which had been so long gathering now burst with a fury that drenched the travellers to the skin, and forced them to cling to the rock to save themselves from being hurled into the abyss by the fierce gusts of wind which howled around, dispersing the mist and disclosing the multitude of horrors which hemmed them in on all sides. The incessant lightning almost blinded them by its brightness; the thunder reverberating among the numerous caverns, nooks, and ravines,

awoke a thousand echoes, while ever and anon shrieks, and yells, and horrid laughter, mingled with the din, as if some presiding demon revelled in the roaring of the elements.

"Now let us proceed," said Fitzgerald, when the hurricane had abated.

"You'll go on then, sir, will you ?" asked Booth.

"Certainly. It would be folly to turn back, now the goal is gained."

Presently they reached a fissure, a cavity, capable of containing a man, immediately under the eyrie. An empty flask bespoke this the resting place of the solitary tenant above.

"Now, remain here, Booth." whispered Fitzgerald, "and let nothing induce you to interfere, or show yourself, unless I call. Recollect! your life may depend upon this," and so saying, he bounded into the eyrie.

This was a mere stone cradle on the very summit, open to the lake, but backed by huge blocks of stone. A solitary figure was seated on

howled fearfully around the pinnacle. Suddenly the figure sprang upon his feet, and seizing a long pole shod with iron, which rested against the rock, stood glaring upon Fitzgerald.

"Good God!" thought the latter, inexpressibly shocked, "can this be Alfred?" and indeed it was impossible to recognize the gay, fastidious, fashionable Sir Alfred Fitzgerald, in the wretched, ragged, filthy figure before him. His face was nearly covered with hair, and there was that in the rolling of his dark blood-shot eye that bespoke a mind diseased.

"Viper!" exclaimed the latter. "What brings you here?"

"I'm come, Alfred," replied his brother, in as soothing a tone as he could command, "to settle matters amicably, if possible; and if your mother's memory is dear to you—that mother

who loved you so well—I am confident you will agree with me in this. That I am sincere in wishing it, my following you here will testify."

"Go on."

"In a word, then, I am willing to make every concession—every sacrifice, consistent with my duty to others, to secure your interest and promote your happiness."

"Oh! I'm to be happy, am I?" said Alfred, with a bitter smile.

"Yes. Why not?" answered Fitzgerald, cheerily. "I see no reason why you should not, notwithstanding the past. Come, come—give up this misanthropy—this absurd—this degrading—this uncharitable hatred of the world and your fellow creatures, and make the best of your lot, which, if not the most brilliant, has, at least, many advantages, and affords all that is necessary for rational happiness and reasonable enjoyment. I would fain see my brother above this weakness."

" an oblivion of the past, and my support for the future. I will settle upon you four thousand pounds a year, which I consider myself at full liberty to do. Now, with such an income, and a judicious employment of your time and talents, aided by my influence, which must necessarily be great, what office in the State is there Alfred Fitzgerald may not aspire to? And, surely, this is a career worth living for."

" What am I to do for all this?" enquired Alfred.

" Nothing more than you ought to do," replied his brother. " Nothing more than, as an honest man, you should wish to do, and you'll be less than honest if you don't do it. Give up to me at once, and without dispute, what you have so long and so unjustly with-

held from me, and by such gracious act atone, as far as lies in your power, for your own faults, and the faults of—others."

"And this you expect me to do?" said Alfred.

"Nothing less! I should wrong you if I did," rejoined his brother.

Here the clouds suddenly opened, and disclosed mountain and lake—pasture and village, with Copton Hall rising in the midst, all bathed in glorious sunshine.

"Now, mark my answer," said Alfred. "When the mist, you see rolling before the wind becomes tangible, then, and not till then, will I resign the estates, and become a pensioner on your bounty! Why, what a poor fool you must take me for. Do you think I've less gall than a pigeon—less courage than a hare—less spirit than a mouse, that I'm to be frightened out of what I have possession of? See what you've made me!"

"Absurd!" said Fitzgerald, contemptuously. "You cannot lay your degradation at my door; you know very well, Alfred, I never injured you."

But for you I should have been happy! You have destroyed my prospects, and my peace of mind. You've robbed me of the affection of the only woman I ever loved, and whose fortune would have retrieved my embarrassment! You have driven me to raise my hand against you! You have fabricated a tissue of falsehoods, and suborned an ungrateful vagabond to testify to a forgery to deprive me of my rank and my inheritance? Yes! viper! All this you have done! And not satisfied, you must now follow me here to glut your eyes with the ruin you have wrought!"

"You talk like a madman," said Fitzgerald, "and I leave you."

"Not till I've repaid the obligation as it deserves," roared Alfred, and, springing on the parapet, he dislodged, with his pole, a boulder under which his brother was stand-

ing; but this, destroying the equilibrium of the rocking stone, threw Alfred with great force upon Booth, whose curiosity had induced him to venture within ear-shot, and then swept both with irresistible force into the lake below.

Fitzgerald, who had only escaped being crushed by springing aside, stood horror-struck at this unexpected catastrophe. He could scarce believe the evidence of his senses, and it was some time before he recovered the shock his nerves had sustained. But sun-set was approaching, and it behoved him to lose no time in quitting the fearful solitude he was in, now doubly hideous to his sight and his feelings. He hastened, therefore, as expeditiously as the difficulty of the descent permitted, to the spot where he had left the horses, in doing which he narrowly escaped destruction, more than once, from his ignorance of the locality.

CHAPTER XXVI.

We shall not weary our readers with an account of the inquest, funeral, &c., &c., but simply state that, by Alfred Fitzgerald's death, a great scandal was avoided, and that Herbert succeeded, as a matter of course, to the title and estates of his brother, though Cranky Nell was supposed to have absconded with a considerable sum in gold, which went to the bottom of the Atlantic with that amiable personage on her passage to New York. It is believed, however, to this day, under Skiddaw, that the Devil carried off Nell *viâ* Black Tarn, and sorely repented his bargain.

At Mr. Billing's request, Fitzgerald removed to that gentleman's house, at Keswick. This was no sooner known than the tenants flocked to welcome and pay homage to their new landlord, who, by reputation, had long been popular among them. They were delighted at being delivered from the grinding and tyranny of Sir Alfred, who had never taken the slightest interest in them, and whom they had disliked even in his boyish days. Nor were the gentry in the town and neighbourhood behind in their congratulations.

The harshness and neglect with which Sir Herbert had been treated by his mother, as well as his distinguished services in the army, strongly interested them in his favour, a feeling which his noble bearing, the sweetness and naturelness of his manner, and the unmistakeable cordiality with which he received them, so different to his brother, immediately increased into enthusiasm. All were loud in his praises, and no one more so than Mr. Billing.

ordered what repairs and improvements he considered necessary to be made, in a liberal spirit. Having thus cared for his tenants, he turned his attention to the Hall, which he found in a better condition than he had expected. The building was immediately placed under the superintendence of an eminent architect, and Fitzgerald having directed Billing to replace as many of the old servants as he could, and engage what might be further required, set off for London.

We will not attempt to describe the various emotions with which Wilson listened to Fitzgerald's narrative, for he thought it due to her affection and devotion to conceal nothing from her. But her indignation at the perfidy of Singleton was paramount.

"The hussy!" she exclaimed. "Dying in her bed was too good for her. She ought to have been buried in a cross road, with a

stake through her. I'm surprised at you condescending to follow her, master Herbert."

"It's a fault on the right side, my dear Wilson," replied Fitzgerald.

"Ah! you're too good by half for this wicked world," rejoined the old lady; "and Booth, too, I've no patience with him. Why didn't he come forward like a man at once, and tell you all he knew? But he tried to make his market with Sir Alfred, no doubt, and if he'd succeeded you'd never have heard of the memorandum."

"Well, he has paid dearly for his double dealing," said Fitzgerald hastily. "But I've a request to make, my dear Wilson, which you must not refuse me.

"It must be a very odd one if I do," replied the old lady laughing. "What is it, Master Herbert?"

"Why, that you'll resume your situation at Copton Hall, as I mean to make it my permanent residence, Bonsor herself wishes for the change."

"When shall I go down?"

gerald, smiling.

"What is that, Master Herbert."

"That you may be present at a certain christening which, I foresee, will take place this summer, my dear Wilson."

"Oh! charming!" cried the old lady. "I wouldn't be absent for worlds."

Fitzgerald next visited Mrs. Booth. He felt uneasy for having taken her husband to the Eagle's Nest, though the latter had lost his life entirely from disregarding his injunctions. He made the widow happy by his bounty.

It was evening when Fitzgerald arrived at Sugden's house in Hampshire. The first person he saw was the little maid, grand in a new suit of sable, with an old pinchbeck watch, almost large enough for a family warming pan, which Mrs. Sugden had given her, tacked to her side. She bobbed, and then smoothing down her feathers, said with

becoming dignity, "Glad to see you, Sir Herbert, hope you're quite well?"

"Yes, quite so, thankee," replied her master, smiling; "where's your mistress?"

"In her *boo-door*, Sir Herbert," rejoined she, bobbing again. "She's reposing of herself, as befits her sitevashion." Then consulting her "warming-pan," she added, "Mr. and Mrs. Sugden has walked out, about fifteen minutes and a half ago, by my watch here."

Leaving "her alone in her glory," Fitzgerald bounded up stairs. Lady Susan was dozing on the sofa. Kneeling, he stole a kiss.

"Ah! don't leave me, dearest," she murmured in her sleep.

Her husband awoke her with another kiss. Half rising she threw her arms about his neck.

"Thank God!" she exclaimed. "I dreamt that you were leaving me."

"Ah! dreams, they say, go by contraries," said her husband smiling "I've won two pair of gloves, which I expect you to give me.

She hid her blushing face in his bosom. He strained her closer. Presently she looked up, and with a tearful eye said,

"I'm so glad you're returned. Your presence re-assures me. I shall feel so much happier now you are with me."

"Why, you little puss you!" said Fitzgerald, playfully. "You're not going to find out any more grey hairs, I hope."

"No, indeed, I've no such disposition, believe me," replied she, sighing.

"Then cheer up, my darling! Be happy as you ought to be, and don't indulge any more in these fancies. There's no necessity for my leaving you again. Our position is assured—our affairs are settled, and all we have to do now is to go down to Copton Hall, which will be ready for us in a few weeks, and enter upon our new duties. Think what a glorious prospect opens upon us?"

"You are right, dear Herbert, you're right," exclaimed Lady Susan, dashing away a tear, and "I'm ashamed of myself. With such a prospect, as you truly observe, and such a support as you, I should be ungrateful indeed not to exert my energies, and see things in their brightest hues; yes, my dear husband," said she, pressing his hand to her heart, "we will unite in the performance of our new duties; we will use, but not abuse the power which God has given us, and find our own happiness by promoting as much as we can the happiness of others."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE town of Keswick wore quite a holiday aspect. The shops were all shut; the houses decorated with flowers and laurel; flags floated from the windows; the inhabitants were dressed in their best attire; groups of expectants crowded the market place, in which a triumphal arch had been erected, while the Fitzgerald tenantry, a numerous and respectable body, well-mounted, waited impatiently on the Penrith road to receive and escort to Copton Hall their new landlord and his lady.

"What's the time?" enquired a six foot Cambrian, who would have made a model Life Guardsman.

"Time they were here," replied the old farmer addressed, looking impatiently at his watch, "I expected them long before this, I can't think what detains them."

"No accident, I hope," interposed a third tenant.

"God forbid!" exclaimed the first speaker. "That would be a bad job for us all."

"Wouldn't it?" cried the old farmer, "for they say she's as good as he is."

"A perfect angel!— a perfect angel?" exclaimed the model Guardsman, rubbing his hands, "and understands business, Billing tells me—practical, quite practical?"

"Capital!" said the third speaker, "it's always best living under those who understand business."

"Always!" said the old farmer, "they never screw you down, or refuse to do what's wanting."

"Of course not," pursued the six feet Cambrian. "They know what's best for them

[illegible] came in his eyes, and he couldn't make too much of me."

"No, sure!" said the old farmer.

"I tell you it's true, I'd swear his heart's in the right place, and—"

"Zounds! there's Billing galloping down the road like mad!" exclaimed the third tenant.

"Then to horse—to horse, lads," cried the model Life Guardsman, "as sure as you're alive they're coming."

"Yes! here they are! Here come the carriages," said the third tenant, springing on his horse, "Huzza! now lets give 'em such a cheer, boys, as they won't forget in a hurry."

The first carriage containing Sir Herbert and Lady Susan, with Mr. and Mrs. Sugden, followed by a second, in which 'Master Her-

bert' with his nurse, and Lady Susan's little maid were seated, now appeared on the summit of the hill. Fitzgerald's feelings almost overcame him as the *cortége*, sweeping rapidly down the road, passed through the living vista of his tenanty, whose welcome was all the heartier from having groaned so long under the oppressive tyranny of Sir Alfred.

As the cavalcade entered the market place, the band struck up, handkerchiefs waved at every window, the bells of the old church rang merrily, while the multitude, delighted with the beauty of Lady Susan as well as the affable demeanor of the whole party, rent the air with their acclamations. As the party drew near to the park gates the peasantry insisted on taking the horses out of the carriage and drawing it up to the portal of the Hall, in which no sooner had Sir Herbert set foot, than the standard, emblazoned with the Fitzgerald's arms was hoisted in the keep, amid the thunder of cannon.

Wilson, at the head of the old servants,

Should it please the Almighty to take me to-morrow, I shall die happy."

The populace were regaled under the superintendence of Jackson, who came down by the mail, and whose jokes were highly relished by all except Lady Susan's little maid, who pronounced them "wulgar." The tenantry sat down to an excellent dinner in the banqueting hall, where Sir Herbert presided, with Lady Susan and Sugden on his right, and Mrs. Sugden and the rector on his left, Mr. Billing officiating as vice. On the cloth being cleared Mr. Bruce, as the oldest tenant, after an appropriate speech, proposed the health of Sir Herbert, and Lady Susan Fitzgerald, which we need scarcely say was drunk with the greatest enthusiasm.

"My friends," said Sir Herbert, in acknowledging the toast, "my wife and myself,

thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the affectionate welcome you have this day given us, as well as for the warm wishes you have expressed for our health and happiness. Our happiness principally depends on yours, and to promote this, no efforts on our part shall be wanting; let us look upon each other as members of one large family, whose interests are one. Let us all do our duty fully, fairly, and honourably towards each other, and leave the rest to *Providence.*"

THE END.

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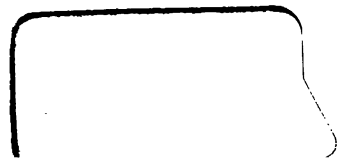
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